■ Lifestyle / J2

Star Awards' signature looks this year

■ Business / B1

Government takes over Maynilad

■ Sports / A25

Team Pacquiao confident of stopping Marquez

■Across / A17

Man killed in failed ambush on Ecija mayor

Tanong ng Bayan / A22

Rest house arrest: Sino ang dapat managot?

NGAYONG ALAS-10 NG GABI

No more blind dates, thanks to Bluetooth tech

ANO BA YAN? WALA NANG LIGAWAN!

PARIS—The person of your dreams could be just a heartbeat away, thanks to a dating game that alerts you when a love match comes within a few meters of your

NO MORE/ A21

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

77 bodies found; recovery operations may be stopped

By Leila B. Salaverria

DIVERS have recovered the remains of possibly up to 77 people from the wreck of the SuperFerry 14 which caught fire three weeks ago, leaving about 40 others still missing, Philippine Coast Guard Commodore Wilfredo Tamayo said yesterday.

77 BODIES/ A21

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Friday, March 19, 2004 ★★★ 80 pages / 10 sections / vol. 19 / no. 102 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Erap speaks at FPJ rally

'Poe is really very sincere in reforming the corrupt gov't'

DETENTION at an Army camp is not stopping deposed President Joseph Estrada from campaigning for his friend Fernando Poe Jr.

As 15,000 people swarmed a rally for Poe in Iligan City, a live interview with Estrada over a radio station was piped in over the public address system. In it, he endorsed the actor and political novice known by his initials FPJ.

"FPJ is my friend. I will support him because he is for the poor," Estrada said on Wednesday from Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal.

"Let us help FPJ because he will also help us. He's really very sincere in reforming the corrupt government," said Estrada, who has been held since April 2001 on charges he illegally amassed P4 billion during his 31 months as president.

Poe enjoys enormous backing from the movie-loving poor as he runs neck-and-neck with President Macapagal-Arroyo ahead of the elections on May 10.

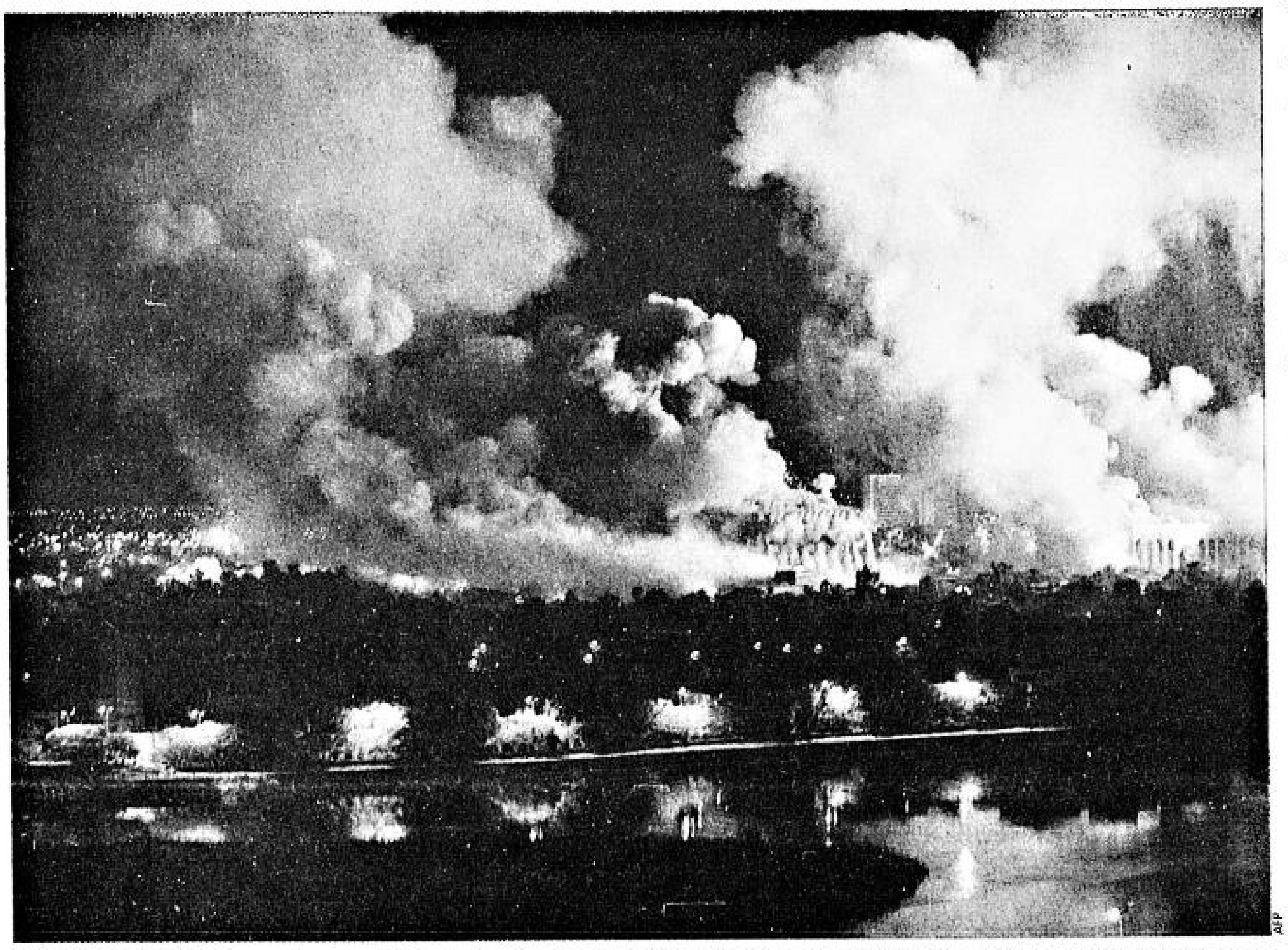
The question is whether Poe will be helped or hindered by his close ties with Estrada. "It's a double-edged sword," Ronald Llamas, president of the political grass-roots organization Akbayan, said yesterday.

"Estrada definitely is a factor in the presidential election. There is still a solid Estrada vote," he said. But fears of a political comeback by Estrada if Poe wins has helped push the business community and middle-class voters to Ms Macapagal, helping her poll ratings catch up with the film star's, according to Llamas.

Estrada, a former action star who suffers from arthritis of the knees, is rarely far from the headlines. He won the presidency in the 1998 election by a landslide.

Even after he was ousted in

ERAP SPEAKS/ A20



AFP

WAR WITHOUT END: A year after the US-led attack on Iraq began on March 20, 2003, and was won in 26 days, Saddam country continues to be a war zone with the latest bombing on Wednesday night of a hotel in central Baghdad which killed 27 people and wounded 45 others. *(See story in The World, Page A12.)*

Guingona to lead protest vs US-led war

VICE PRESIDENT Teofisto Guingona Jr. yesterday joined the Justice Not War Coalition in expressing unity with the Iraqi people, particularly the noncombatants, who suffered "devastation" in the US-led invasion and continuing occupation of Iraq.

Guingona expressed grief for those who died "without justifiable cause." He called attention to the moral aspect of the war, "where it is clear that might does not mean right, where the strong went ahead with their one-sided offense that brought devastation to an entire nation and people."

The coalition of cause-oriented and religious groups called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to immediately stop supporting the US war and demanded the pullout of the Filipino contingent in Iraq.

It announced solidarity with like-minded organizations in 45 countries worldwide preparing protest actions for tomorrow, the "Global Day of Action to End the US-UK Occupation of Iraq."

In Manila, protesters will hold a prayer assembly at the Liwasang Bonifacio at 9 a.m., followed by a rally at the US Embassy on Roxas Boulevard.

It was on March 20 last year that the "Coalition of the Willing" invaded Iraq, an act supposedly intended to root out Iraqi Presi-

GUINGONA/ A20

Estrada allowed 36-hr visit to sick ma

By Armand N. Nocum and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

HE CAN again leave his detention cell at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal.

But this time, deposed President Joseph Estrada's foray out of the Army camp has the go-signal of the Sandiganbayan which is trying him for graft and plunder.

Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Minita Chico-Nazario yesterday granted the request of Estrada for a 36-hour pass to enable him to visit his ailing 99-year-old mother at the San Juan Medical Center in Metro Manila.

Doña Mary Ejercito's blood pressure reportedly shot up last week amid the brouhaha over reports that her son was being allowed to stay at his rest house across from Camp Capinpin.

The pass starts at 5 a.m. today and ends at 6 p.m. tomorrow, according to the anti-graft court.

The Sandiganbayan has set do's and don't's for the visit. Estrada can stay only at the hospital. He can meet only with immediate relatives. He cannot use a cell phone. Interviews with the media are a no-no and cameras are banned.

Before getting the pass, Estrada had stayed at his rest house on several occasions without the authorization of the Sandiganbayan. He also visited his mother during the Christmas holidays.

His sneaking out of the military detention camp had drawn howls

ESTRADA/ A20

Gov't cracks down on private armies

CRACK DOWN on private armies.

President Macapagal-Arroyo issued the order to the police and the military yesterday amid concerns that some 125 private armed groups in the pay of warlords could trigger a bloodbath during the May 10 elections.

"I am directing the Philippine National Police, with the support of the (Armed Forces) as needed, to go after private armies that pose a threat to free and orderly polls, especially in areas declared as election hot spots," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

"We need ... to control election violence before it starts."

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya said the number of pre-election violent incidents so far was still below the number of recorded violent incidents in previous elections—110 in 1995, 267 in 1998 and 269 three years later.

"But there is a possibility that we might surpass or equal last (election's) number of violent incidents," Abaya told reporters.

Private armies, or armed supporters of politicians, have been a cause of political violence in the country, where elections are often marred by the assassination of

GOV'T/ A10

'RP sits on edge of population volcano'

BIRTH control is a subject the main presidential contenders have chosen to quietly ignore.

For President Macapagal-Arroyo, birth control is not an issue, and her main rival in the elections set for May 10, movie actor Fernando Poe Jr., also prefers not to discuss it.

The Philippines is sitting on the edge of a population volcano, according to Tomas Osias, executive director of the Commission on Population.

Osias said unless population growth was addressed now it would have a major impact on the social and economic development of the entire nation that could see its population effectively double to between 160 million and 170 million within the next 30 years.

"If our birth rate is to go unchecked, it will impact on food production, health and education services, the environment, housing and so on. It will be a major problem for any government," he said.

The Philippines now has the highest birth rate in Asia. According to the 2000 census, the Philippine population stood at 76.5 million and was growing at 2.36 percent a year or 1.7 million new births. Today, the population is estimated at 84 million.

Roberto de Ocampo, who was

RP SITS/ A10

GMA warns vs Poe, Marcos, Erap cronies and 'kitchenomics'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

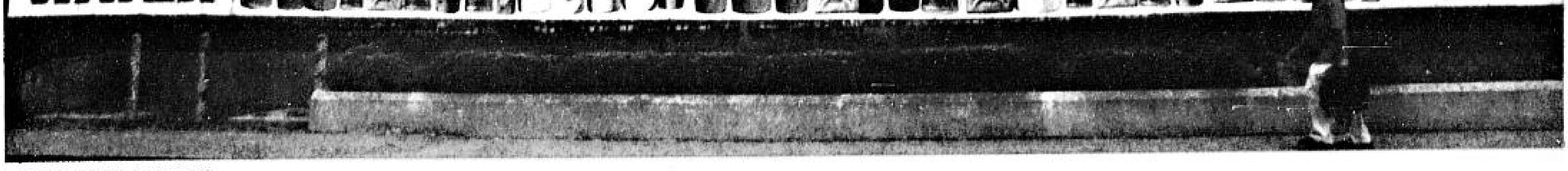
PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday cautioned voters against choosing not only the "untested and unknown" but also the cronies and "midnight Cabinet" of ousted Presidents Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada.

"Many seem to be distracted by the siren song of the same politics and the same politicians we had resolutely rejected in 1986 and again in 2001," she said in a speech at the 3rd UP Public Lectures on the Philippine Presidency and Administration.

"We can move forward and realize our destiny as a modern nation or make a U-turn back to the 'kitchenomics' of the past. It is a choice not just between politicians and personalities, it is a choice between futures."

"The May election will be much more than a battle of personalities," she said. "It is rather a contest between competing ideologies, [between] old politics and new, between inspiration and desperation, between experience and amateurism serving as the mask of those who want us to go back to the dark ages we threw away in [Edsa I and II]."

GMA WARNS/ A20



THE LONG GREY LINE

Grabbing reminder from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of what could well happen in the long, hot summer ahead stretches clear across the Meralco fence in Ortigas, Pasig City.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Visayas and Eastern Mindanao will have rains and occasional gusty winds and the coastal waters of these areas will be moderate to rough The rest of Visayas and the rest of Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers.
SOURCE PAGASA

COMPILED BY RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/03/19/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Widespread Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

TAX CREDIT SCAM

Smear job vs witnesses hit

SPECIAL Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio yesterday said more people are willing to come forward and testify in the multi-million tax credit scam even as he deplored the "demolition job" to discredit the key witnesses.

Villa-Ignacio, who is taking the lead in the prosecution of those involved, said three witnesses have said they want to testify in exchange for immunity.

"But we are not revealing their names so us not to make them easy targets for those behind this demolition job on our witnesses," he said.

Villa-Ignacio said the prosecutors have built a good and effective "strategy" to pin down the accused in the scam which involved the sale of P24 million worth of fake tax credit certificates in the name Rohm Electronics to Nissan Motors Corp. and Splash Manufacturing Corp.

The two companies later used the spurious TCCs to pay their tax obligations.

Villa-Ignacio said the "seriousness" shown by prosecutors in the TCC cases that have dragged on for almost three years now may have panicked some of those involved in the scam.

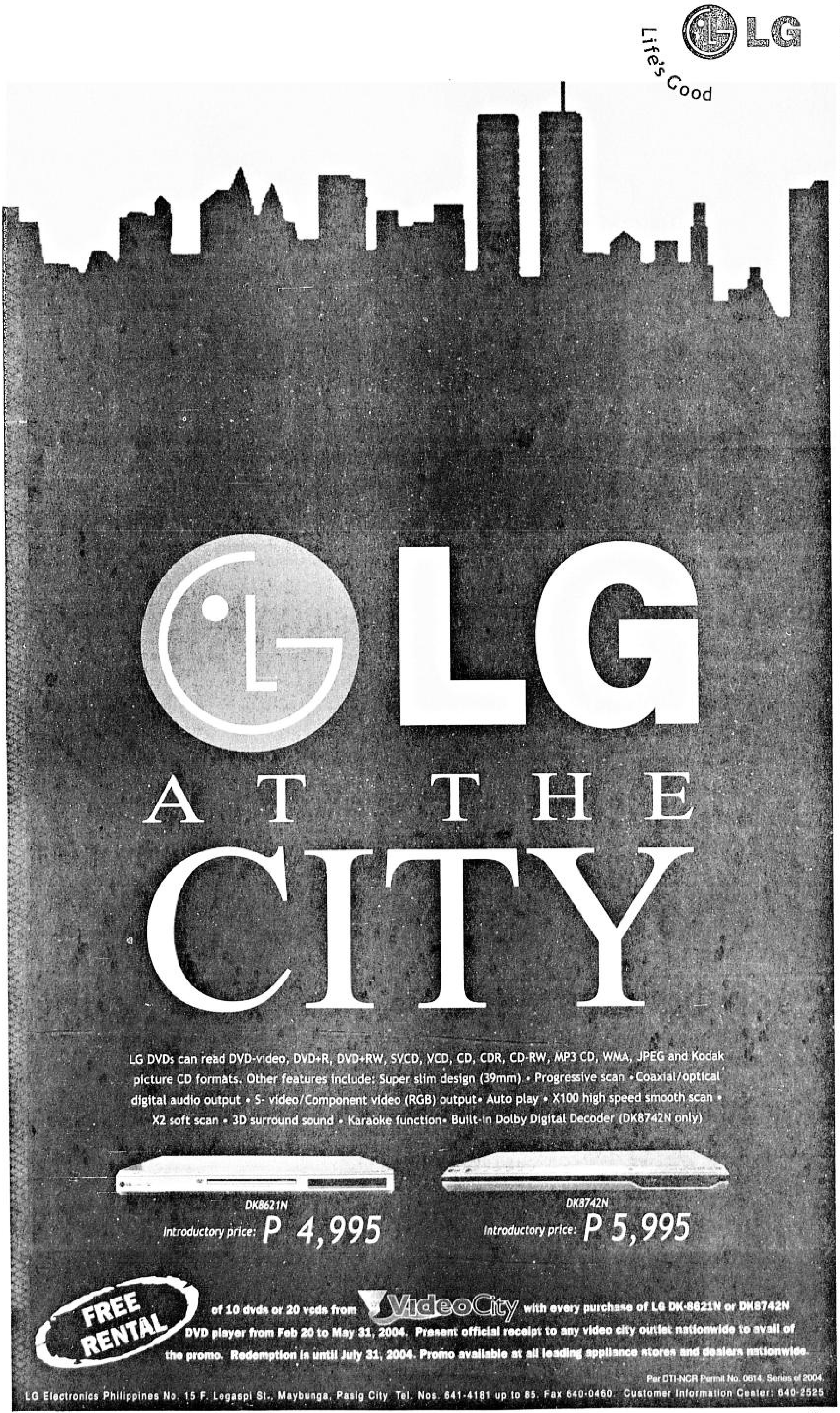
"Maybe this is what's making them jittery. Unseen hands are out to derail the focus of the prosecution. They are trying to discredit our witnesses," he said.

He cited the case of Ernesto Hiansen, executive director of the One-Stop Shop Credit and Duty Drawback Center (OSS), who blew the whistle on the scam but has now been unaccountably charged by the National Bureau of Investigation for allegedly failing to stop the transfer of the fake TCCs.

Villa-Ignacio credits Hiansen with not only blowing the whistle on the scam but also with helping the state to build a strong case against the accused.

He said the move of Finance Secretary Juanito Amatong to probe the Hiansen case was welcome.

Apart from the P24-million tax scam, Hiansen is also a witness in several cases of tax credit fraud, including the P5.3-billion tax credit scam involving the Chingkoe group of companies.
Armand N. Nocum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Customs exec in hot water over tax deal

By Armand N. Nocum

AN OFFICIAL of the customs bureau who earlier failed a lifestyle check, may have to answer for a far more serious offense, this time involving an illegal deal with a firm that owes the government P37.2 million in customs duties and taxes.

Graft investigators from the Ombudsman's office stumbled on the scam while investigating Customs Deputy Commissioner Gil A. Valera whose income in his statement of assets and liabilities was shown to have grown by P1.2 million from 2001 to 2002.

Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo immediately ordered Valera's suspension for six months without pay.

In a news briefing, Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said Valera was found to have entered into a "compromise agreement" with the Steel Asia Manufacturing Corp. (SAMC) which reportedly paid P37 million in duties and taxes using "fake, spurious and counterfeit" tax credit certificates.

Villa-Ignacio said Valera, who headed the Bureau of Customs' revenue collection and monitoring group, had no authority to enter into a compromise with the steel company.

In his suspension order, Marcelo noted that Valera initially charged the firm before a Manila regional court with a "a civil case for collection of money with damages" and for the court to issue a "writ of preliminary attachment" against the firm's properties in 2001.

But when the court was about to go after the firm's properties, Valera stopped the seizure by presenting a "Joint Motion for the Approval of a Compromise Agreement" that he had signed with Antonio Lorenzana, the SAMC president.

In the agreement, the firm agreed to make staggered payments on its taxes from Jan. 28, 2002 to June 28, 2004.

The investigation found that Valera went into the deal without authority from Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo, which was contrary to law.

According to the Tariff and Customs Code, only the BOC commissioner, subject to the approval of the secretary of finance, may enter into a compromise agreement with any party to a case.

In a certification dated July 23, 2003, Bernardo denied ever authorizing Valera to enter into a compromise agreement with the SAMC on behalf of the customs bureau.

SC clears CA justice

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The Supreme Court has cleared an associate justice of the Court of Appeals from charges of grave misconduct in connection with the appointment of an acting deputy sheriff for a regional trial court in Laguna.

In an en banc decision penned by Associate Justice Adolfo Azcuna, the high tribunal said Associate Justice Rodrigo Cosico, who was then a regional court judge, acted in good faith when he named Ireneo Paz acting deputy sheriff for Branch 31 of the regional trial court in San Pedro.

Paz's assignment was questioned in the SC by RTC Judge Pablo Francisco of Biñan, Laguna on grounds that the former was not qualified because he was a laborer at the general services department at the time of his appointment.

Francisco said Cosico defied the SC's appointing power as provided for in the Constitution when he made the assignment when he was still executive judge of Biñan RTC.

According to Francisco, Cosico also violated a high tribunal circular, which spells out the rules on the designation of any person who will serve court processes and writs in areas where there were no regular sheriffs.

But the Supreme Court said Cosico made the assignment while there was an existing vacancy for the position. The court said the appointment was aimed at "responding to the need at that time."

Adopting the recommendation of retired SC Justice Santiago Kapunan who investigated the complaint, the court said Cosico appointed Paz as a matter of "extreme necessity" and within the authority of Administrative Circular No. 12, which allowed a judge to designate any person to serve court processes in remote areas.

FPJ's dodging debates alarming–Ping

By Norman Bordadora

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson yesterday said the continued refusal of rival presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. to participate in a debate was cause for alarm.

"We should all be worried. Any candidate who cannot address or confront the issues of the country is problematic because some people whose interests we are not sure of might take control (if he wins)," Lacson said at a news conference here.

The first in a series of scheduled debates is expected to be participated in by only two of the five presidential candidates—former Education Secretary Raul Roco and evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva.

"This is the best opportunity for any candidate for any position to confront the issues, present his or her platform of government and propose solutions to our problems. If a candidate cannot do that, it is ominous that we will have a big problem if he gets elected," Lacson said.

While Lacson said that he was not particularly referring to his co-opposition bet, the fact remained that Poe was the only candidate to shy away from a debate, saying it was "all talk."

President Macapagal-Arroyo was ready to participate until she learned that Poe was not going to be there; while Lacson himself begged off after the President backed out.

LACSON

In an interview on ANC News Wednesday night, Lacson was more blunt about Poe's continued refusal to debate.

"(If he wins) will his handlers still do the work for him? That's the problem we have," he said.

Asked if Poe was not being overly influenced by his handlers, Lacson replied, "Mr. Angara and company can answer that."

Lacson has been at odds with Senators Edgardo Angara and Vicente Sotto III since the two leaders of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino bypassed an agreed-upon selection process to pick Poe over himself, a party member, as the opposition standard bearer.

The Lacson camp also blamed Angara, Sotto and Ernesto Maceda, a senatorial candidate on Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) slate, for the cancelation of the scheduled one-on-one meeting between Lacson and Poe last Tuesday.

Both men almost caught up with each other in this city but Poe had left by the time Lacson arrived in the morning. Both were billeted at the Pryce Hotel.

"I'd ask him if he really was the one who canceled the meeting," Lacson replied, when asked what he would have said to Poe had they met in this city.

The Poe camp admitted it was the movie star who backed out of the meeting because of the attention it was generating after Lacson announced it to the media.

Comelec info chief moved

THE COMMISSION on Elections' information chief was transferred yesterday to Region 8 to fill up a post vacated by an official who is running for a local post.

In an en banc resolution, Comelec director Ferdinand Rafanan was also ordered relieved as the head of the group tasked to prosecute the 110,000 double/multiple registrants in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The former director for Region 8 was lawyer Edwina Mendoza who resigned from her post to seek a local position in Cavite.

Guingona rejects calls for him to resign

VICE President Teofisto Guingona Jr. yesterday rejected calls for his resignation, insisting that he continued to be "part of government" even if he has taken on the job of adviser on governance and public policy for opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

"My role [as Vice President] is not that of an appointed official. While the President nominated me, as provided under the Constitution, both chambers of Congress, voting separately, unanimously confirmed my nomination," Guingona said in a statement.

"There is no moral or legal reason for me to resign or even take a leave. I have not betrayed any of the prohibitions of the Constitution," he said.

Guingona also said that he has the right to exercise the freedoms accorded to every Filipino citizen.

"As citizen and as Vice President, while my views may differ from that of the Chief Executive, I believe I can still freely exercise my political rights as safeguarded by the Constitution," he said.

On Tuesday, Bacolod City Rep. Monico Puentevella, a leading member of the ruling Lakas-Christian Democrats, said Guingona should quit as he had compromised his position.

"We commiserate with him for having destroyed what he built all these years on his principles and convictions. If any of those remain, he should quit the vice presidency," Puentevella said.

Jerome Aning

Ka Roger denies NPA backing Poe

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—Communist party spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal had a big laugh over the political opposition's claim the New People's Army (NPA) had thrown its support behind the candidacy of Fernando Poe Jr.

"That's ridiculous," said Rosal in a mobile phone interview, reiterating that the revolutionary movement did not support political candidates because it did not believe in the election process.

In a statement on Tuesday, Army Gen. Jaime Echeverria (ret.), a Poe supporter, claimed that NPA guerrillas had come down from the mountains around Claveria, Misamis Oriental, to attend the movie actor's political rally—a sign that the rebels supported Poe.

Retorted Rosal: "Our Red fighters are very careful. They avoid unnecessary exposure. Then here comes the claim that our guerrillas had attended FPJ's rally.

"Did the NPA also carry posters declaring support for FPJ?" he said mockingly.

In a separate statement, however, Rosal took positive note of Poe's promise to "immediately reach out to all groups that have taken up arms against the government and engage in a genuine dialogue to end insurgencies."

But he also chided Poe's camp for coming up with "movie-like tales."

He recalled that when the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino campaigned in Quezon last month, Manny Portes, president of Freedom, Peace and Justice (FPJ Movement), boasted that the opposition coalition had been exempted from paying revolutionary permit-to-campaign fees by the communist group's Netherlands-based leaders.

"Now it's the NPA supporting FPJ. What's next?" Rosal asked.

When queried how self-exiled Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder Jose Ma. Sison could openly declare support for the vice presidential candidacy of Sen. Loren Legarda, Rosal replied, "Comrade Joma is acting by himself. He is not the CPP-NPA-NDF (National Democratic Front).

Sison, also the NDF's chief consultant, personally endorsed Legarda's candidacy earlier this year. He said that as vice president, Legarda would be in a better position to push forward the peace negotiations between the communists and the government.

Rosal stressed that all candidates, including those belonging to party-list groups, were required by the laws of the revolutionary government to obtain permits to campaign.

Mutineers get only P60 a day

By Alcuin papa

SIXTY pesos a day is all they're getting.

This is what more than 200 Magdalo soldiers who participated in the July 27 Oakwood mutiny will see in their pay checks, representing their daily subsistence allowance, after Malacañang handed down the order for the suspension of their salaries last March 11.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya justified the decision, saying the suspension had legal basis.

"The basic philosophy behind it is that they (the soldiers) were fighting the very institution that is providing their benefits," Abaya said. "Why would you be paying them benefits when they are fighting the source of those benefits?"

He added that he has the authority to suspend the benefits of the enlisted personnel who joined the Oakwood mutiny, while President Macapagal-Arroyo has the authority to suspend the pay of the 31 high-ranking Magdalo leaders.

Ruel Pulido, one of the lawyers for the soldiers, had told reporters that the military leadership had no right to suspend the soldiers' pay after the Supreme Court issued a status quo order on the court martial proceedings.

AFP Judge Advocate General Brig. Gen. Mariano Sarmiento, on the other hand, told reporters yesterday that the soldiers will continue to be detained for as long as the court martial proceedings are delayed.

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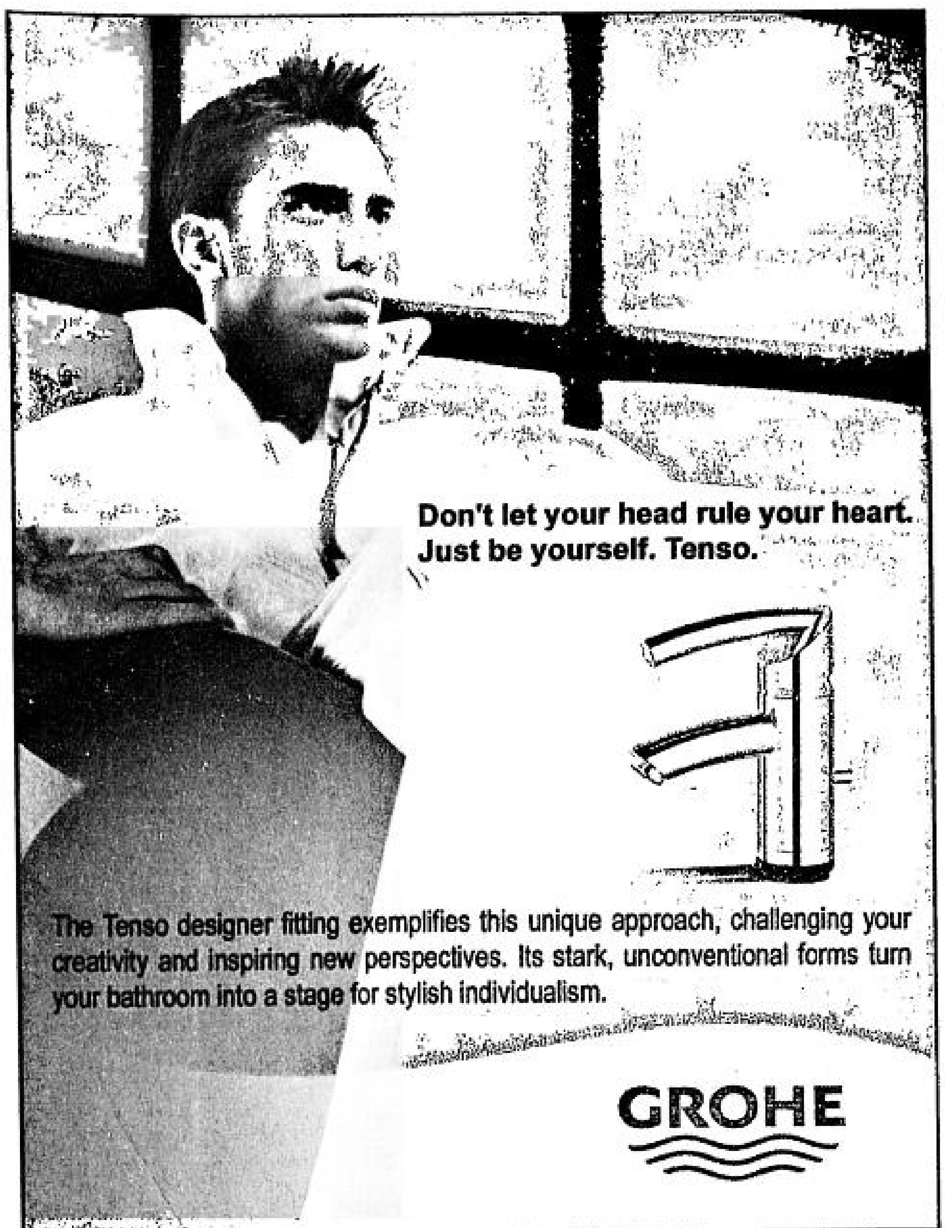

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Viets rescue 11 Pinoys off Spratlys

HANOI—Eleven Filipino fishermen who were rescued near the disputed Spratly islands after their boat was badly damaged in a storm have been sent home, an official said yesterday.

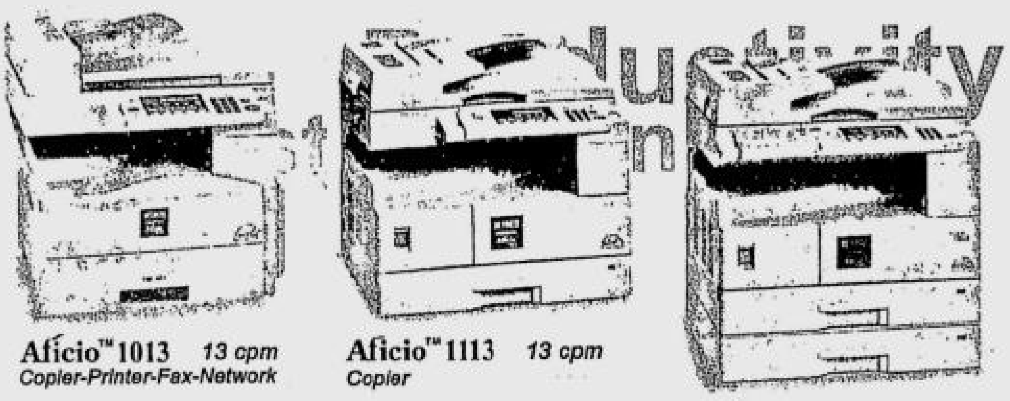
Two Vietnamese fishing boats rescued the fishermen off the coast of central Vietnam on March 8 when big waves wrecked their boat, according to a provincial foreign office representative. No one was injured in the incident.

The fishermen were handed over to Philippine Embassy officials on Wednesday in Vietnam's central coastal city of Quy Nhon.

On March 3, two days after leaving the Philippines, a storm left their fishing boat with a serious leak that forced them to bail water around the clock to prevent it from sinking.

The boat drifted near Vietnamese territorial waters and on March 8 they were spotted by two Vietnamese boats and rescued. The crew reached shore on Monday and were handed over to local authorities.

"We are very grateful to Vietnam for the assistance accorded to our nationals," a spokesperson for the Philippine Embassy told AFP. The 11 fishermen, who are all in good health after a six-day ordeal at sea, will return home on Saturday, she added. *AP, AFP*



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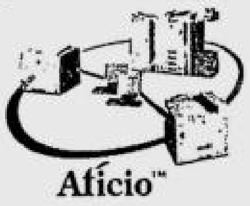

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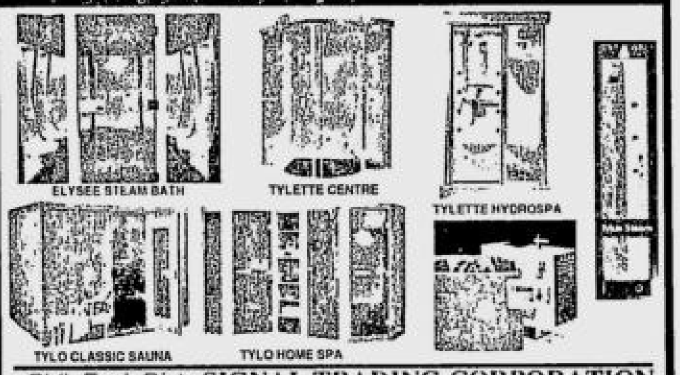

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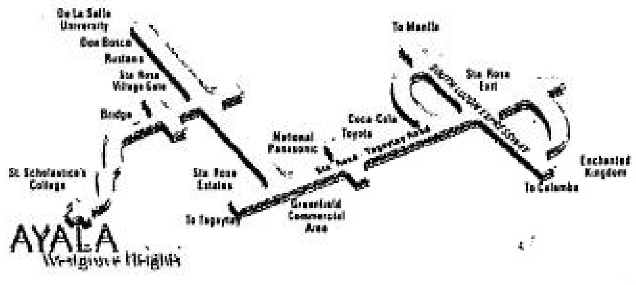

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Gov't won't negotiate for captured soldiers

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday ruled out negotiations for the release of two soldiers held by communist rebels, vowing to take military action instead.

Communist New People's Army guerrillas have asked the government to stop assaults in Camarines Sur, where the soldiers were captured March 1, to pave the way for negotiations for their release. But the military said it was taking steps to rescue the soldiers.

Rebel spokesman Gregorio Rosal said the guerrillas were willing to negotiate with a government panel involved in peace talks, and assured that 1st Lt. Ronaldo Sedelino and Pfc. Ronel Lemino were being treated well.

"All we need is just a signal from the government to start the negotiations," Rosal told radio station dzRH, adding that communications can be done by phone or e-mail.

The presidential adviser on the peace process, Teresita Deles, rejected the offer.

"We will not negotiate on this one," Deles told The Associated Press. "We have to take military action."

The rebels have released video and photos of the captives apparently being held in a jungle camp. The footage showed one soldier, who looked fearful with his hands tied behind his back, being led to a wooded area as a guerrilla escort tapped him on the shoulder and said: "Don't worry, you will live."

Deles said she did not expect the soldiers' capture to imperil peace talks with the rebels, which are set to resume in Norway.

Despite the talks, both sides were still fighting in the absence of a ceasefire, she said.

On Wednesday, the guerrillas simultaneously attacked an army detachment and a police station in the South, triggering clashes that wounded five security men and two civilians.

The military said it would step up offensives against the insurgents to attain a conducive environment for the May 10 presidential election.

Considered the most serious threat to the country's security, the estimated 9,000 rural-based Maoist guerrillas have been waging a Marxist rebellion for 35 years, one of Asia's longest insurrections. Washington has blacklisted the rebels as terrorists. *AP*

Search on for RP's top soldiers

THE METROBANK Foundation Inc. and Rotary Club of Makati Metro, together with the Armed Forces of the Philippines recently launched the 2004 search for The Outstanding Philippine Soldiers (TOPS) in simple rites at the New World Hotel in Makati.

The TOPS Award seeks to encourage and recognize models of personal and professional excellence as well as outstanding track records of service and achievement among the country's military personnel, the foundation said in a press statement. The search also looks into the nominee's personal character, professional training, and contribution to the advancement of the public good.

Winners will be chosen for their career achievements in the military service. Those who have at least seven years of service in the military are eligible to join the search. The search will choose two outstanding noncommissioned officers and one outstanding commissioned officer each from the Army, Navy and Air Force, and one awardee from the Technical Services Units. Each awardee will receive a cash prize of P100,000 plus a trophy courtesy of the Metrobank Foundation.

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Endorsing bets bad for Danding's business–KNP

By Carlito Pablo

IT'S bad for business.

This is the reason why king maker and businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco is shunning a high-profile presence in the current political landscape, according to former Rep. Mike Romero, spokesperson for the Fernando Poe Jr.-led Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP).

Romero confirmed reports that more than a majority of Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) were backing the candidacy of Poe, once a successful endorser of San Miguel Beer, the main product of Cojuangco's flagship company San Miguel Corp.

SMC is locked in litigation in various courts, having been the object of ill-gotten wealth recovery efforts by the government since the 1986 ouster of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

Cojuangco, who has staunchly claimed that he used his personal wealth to acquire his business holdings, was closely identified with Marcos.

Romero noted that Cojuangco had previously contemplated running again for president in the May 10, 2004 elections but shelved this option after his survey ratings did not pick up.

Cojuangco ran but lost in 1992 presidential elections. He regained firm control over SMC during the time of disgraced President Joseph Estrada, who was his running mate in the 1992 polls.

According to Romero, he doubts if Cojuangco would come out in the open to endorse a particular candidate, whether it's Poe or re-electionist President Macapagal-Arroyo, and that the influential businessman had "released NPC leaders to choose whom to support."

In a separate phone interview, Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio (NPC, South Cotabato) also expressed doubts whether Cojuangco would make public whom he supports among the presidential contenders. "I don't know if he will come out to support anybody," said Antonino-Custodio, who herself is identified with the Poe camp.

She said the NPC was still in the process of discussing whether it would come out with an official party position on the presidential elections.

In published reports on Nov. 28, Rep. Imee Marcos (KBL, Ilocos Norte) said Cojuangco was believed to have been instrumental in making Poe decide to run for president.

Marcos also said in the same report that the NPC will soon have to severe its alliance with the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats.

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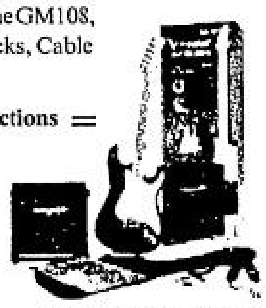

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Gov't cracks down on private armies

From page A1

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Ermita urges calm

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He said these areas were classified as potential flashpoints because of their "bloody history" of poll violence brought about by intense political rivalry and the presence of private armies and rebel groups, including the communist New People's Army (NPA).

"All these things are known to the authorities and this is why they were classified as hot spots. But this does not necessarily mean that violence will erupt in these areas this May," Ermita said.

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Tale of 2 countries

		Philippines	Thailand
Land area (sq. kilometers)		300,000	511,770
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"That situation is unacceptable. There needs to be a better separation of Church and State on this matter. I don't think the State should carry just the view of the Church on this matter," De Ocampo said.

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"Today, Thailand has a population of 64 million and the Philippines 84 million. Thais average $1,960 per capita, the Philippines is struggling at $1,020."

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Population control is a contentious issue in the country. The Constitution clearly delineates between Church and State because the State must be responsible for the people's well-being and quality of life. The Church, on the other hand, has a more limited responsibility for the moral values and religious beliefs of its flock.

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NPC solons say they're staying with GMA

SOME of their colleagues may be thinking of switching sides, but several congressmen from the Nationalist People's Coalition and a party-list organization today reaffirmed their support for President Macapagal-Arroyo, expressing confidence that her victory would ensure the continuity of good governance.

The reaffirmation of support was expressed by NPC Representatives Douglas Cagas, (Davao del Sur), Benasing Macarambon, (Lanao del Sur), Claude Bautista, (Davao del Sur), Marcelino Libanan, (Eastern Samar), Vincent Garcia,(Davao City) and Benjamin Cruz of the farmers' organization Butil.

On Wednesday, Rep. Harry Angpin said that about 60 per cent of NPC congressmen, and 20 more from the Lakas-Christian-Muslim Democrats were poised to support Ms Macapagal's chief rival, Fernando Poe Jr. of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

In a statement, Cagas, vice chair of the house committee on local government, said they are proud of their decision to support the President given her merits and accomplishments in the three years of leading the nation, especially in Mindanao. "Her commitment to peace and the development of Mindanao will carry her on to victory in the South," he said.

Garcia, vice chair of the committee on economic affairs, said he would back the President because of her track record, experience and competence as a leader.

On the other hand, Libanan, chair of the committee on justice, hopes the NPC coalition with the administration party in Congress will continue to be productive because of the success of the executive-legislative partnership.

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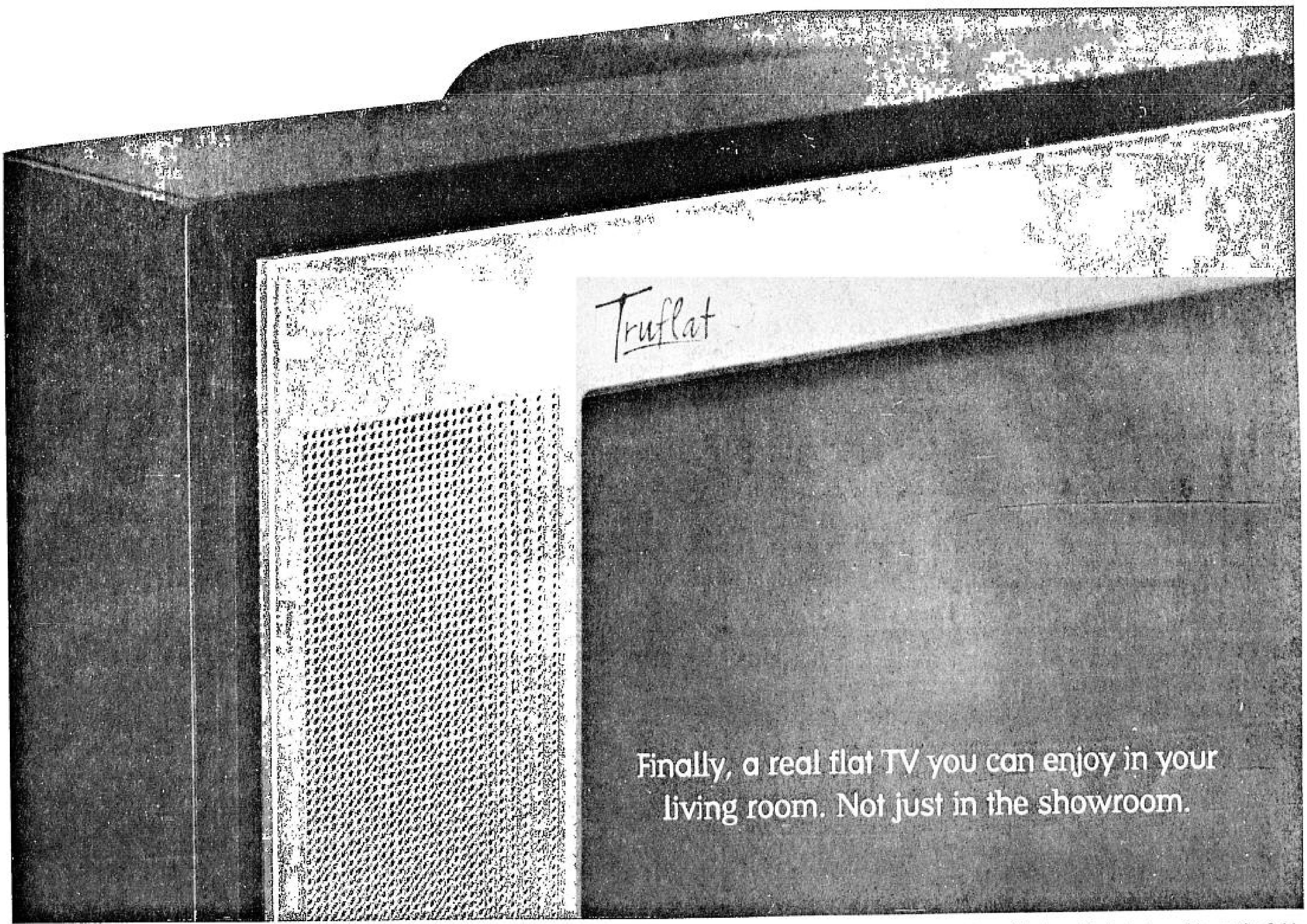
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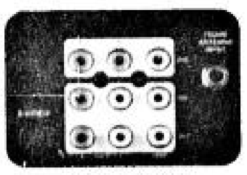
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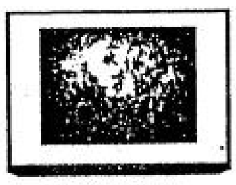
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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Baghdad car bomb attack kills 27

BAGHDAD—Rescuers said on Thursday there were no more survivors in the rubble of a central Baghdad neighborhood shattered by a powerful car bomb that killed as many as 27 people and wounded dozens.

The US army said Wednesday night's attack, which devastated the small Mount Lebanon Hotel and neighboring residential buildings, bore the hallmark of the Ansar al-Islam militant group or of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian accused by Washington of working for al-Qaida to sow chaos in Iraq.

Rescuers, some using bare hands, worked into the early hours of Thursday trying to find people trapped under the smoldering ruins. Locals helped carry away bodies torn apart by the blast.

A senior US military official said Iraqi police estimated 17 dead but the toll was likely to be higher. On Wednesday, US officers at the scene put the death toll at 27.

He said the fact that the explosion was in the middle of the road, rather than closer to the hotel, suggested that the Mount Lebanon may not have been the intended target.

"If somebody was trying to target the hotel you would expect them to get as close to the hotel as possible," he said.

Rescue workers said most of the dead were Iraqis who were in neighboring houses hit by the blast. Hospital officials said on Thursday a 22-year-old British man was among those killed.

By first light, smoke was still rising from a smoldering house, its front wall ripped off in the explosion. On the upper story, a picture still hung on the wall, a mattress and carpet lying on the floor of what used to be somebody's bedroom.

Two US soldiers were also killed on Wednesday in separate mortar attacks by guerrillas, the US army said.

Mortar fire at a US base near Baghdad killed one soldier and wounded seven on Wednesday afternoon, and in the evening a mortar attack on Qusayba on the Syrian border killed a US Marine and wounded three, the military said.

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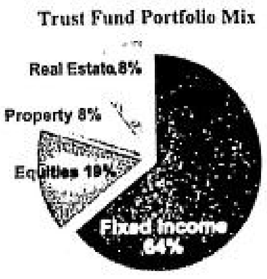

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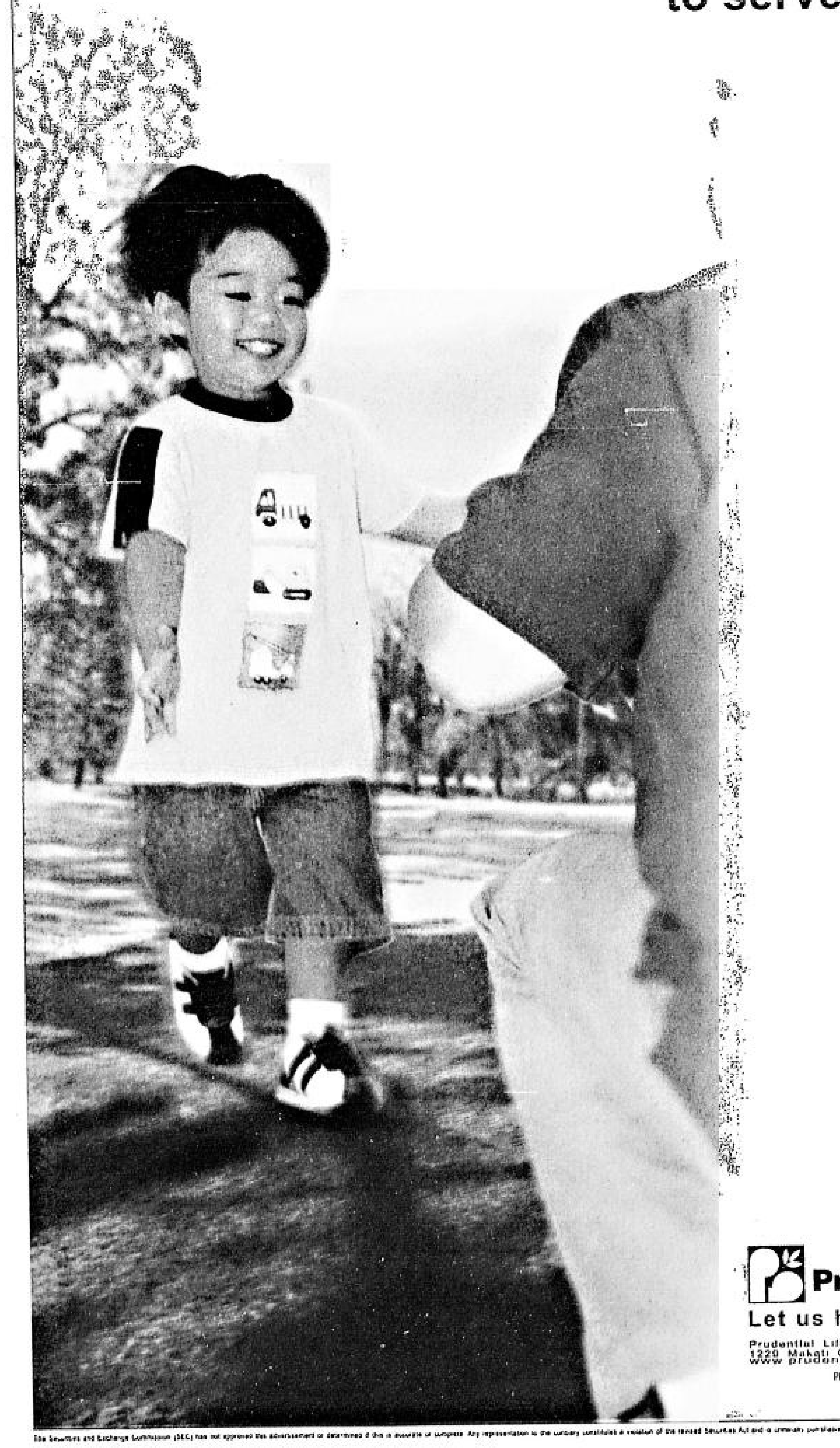

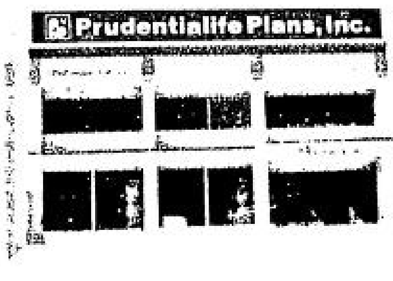
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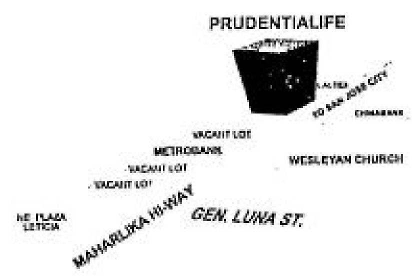

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Kosovo slides into violence; peace hopes dim

PRISTINA, Serbia and Montenegro—Kosovo's fragile peace exploded in the worst clashes between Albanians and Serbs since Nato and the UN took control in 1999, plunging hopes of a success for international intervention into grave doubt.

At least 17, perhaps 20, people were killed on Wednesday as Nato troops scrambled to quell the outbreak. But it was the scale of the violence rather than the death toll which signaled crisis.

In a severe blow to international hopes of calm ahead of talks this year or next on Kosovo's future status, the outburst of pent-up ethnic hatred in over a dozen locations suggested that reconciliation of the two ethnic communities was years off.

Clashes were reported from Mitrovica in the north to Urosevac in the south and Pec in the west, with UN police and troops injured in several places, at least three gravely.

The Kosovo Health Ministry said 16 were confirmed killed—six in Mitrovica, three in Lipljan, three in Caglavica, two in Urosevac, one in Pec and one in Gnjilane. A 17th victim was recorded in the capital Pristina as mob violence spread and there were unconfirmed reports of three more dead in Gnjilane.

Kosovo has been under the control of the United Nations since Nato bombing drove Serb forces out in mid-1999, halting Serb repression of Muslim Albanian civilians but also granting victory to Albanian separatist guerrillas.

Fueling fears that Albanians might turn on their Nato and UN saviors if independence is delayed, mobs clashed on Wednesday with peacekeepers and police across the province.

United Nations Kosovo police veteran Derek Chappell called it "a very dangerous situation ... very large scale." Kosovo Serb politician Momcilo Trajkovic said: "We are back in 1999."

The violence began when Albanians massed in Mitrovica to vent their rage at Tuesday's drowning of three boys. A survivor had said they were hounded into a river by Serbs, who were exacting revenge for a teenager wounded in a drive-by shooting.

Shooting broke out and grenades were thrown as police and troops fired tear gas and rubber bullets to stop Albanians storming the Serb half of the town.

Two red-and-white UN police jeeps burned fiercely and wreaths of tear gas drifted over Mitrovica as soldiers moved block to block to clear a security zone in the afternoon.

Late on Wednesday, hundreds of angry Albanians surrounded a Serb enclave in the capital Pristina, setting UN vehicles on fire and stoning police who fired rubber bullets. US troops were evacuating Serbs whose apartments were under attack.

Serbia's Beta agency reported that US troops in a convoy of 30 armored personnel carriers drove to the central village of Caglavica to evacuate 10 injured Nato peacekeepers after clashes with Albanians attacking the enclave of 1,000 Serbs.

In Belgrade, Serb demonstrators broke through a police cordon and set fire to a mosque. Witnesses said demonstrators also smashed windows of the US Embassy.

There were Serb demonstrations in the northern city of Novi Sad and a mosque was burned in the southern city of Nis, a television report said.

Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica ruled out any military response in the province of Kosovo, which Serbian troops quit in 1999. Such a move would trigger a major confrontation with Nato. *Reuters*

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Baghdad car bomb attack kills 27

BAGHDAD—Rescuers said on Thursday there were no more survivors in the rubble of a central Baghdad neighborhood shattered by a powerful car bomb that killed as many as 27 people and wounded dozens.

The US army said Wednesday night's attack, which devastated the small Mount Lebanon Hotel and neighboring residential buildings, bore the hallmark of the Ansar al-Islam militant group or of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian accused by Washington of working for al-Qaida to sow chaos in Iraq.

Rescuers, some using bare hands, worked into the early hours of Thursday trying to find people trapped under the smoldering ruins. Locals helped carry away bodies torn apart by the blast.

A senior US military official said Iraqi police estimated 17 dead but the toll was likely to be higher. On Wednesday, US officers at the scene put the death toll at 27.

He said the fact that the explosion was in the middle of the road, rather than closer to the hotel, suggested that the Mount Lebanon may not have been the intended target.

"If somebody was trying to target the hotel you would expect them to get as close to the hotel as possible," he said.

Rescue workers said most of the dead were Iraqis who were in neighboring houses hit by the blast. Hospital officials said on Thursday a 22-year-old British man was among those killed.

By first light, smoke was still rising from a smoldering house, its front wall ripped off in the explosion. On the upper story, a picture still hung on the wall, a mattress and carpet lying on the floor of what used to be somebody's bedroom.

Two US soldiers were also killed on Wednesday in separate mortar attacks by guerrillas, the US army said.

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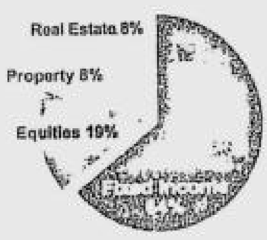
Trust Fund Portfolio Mix



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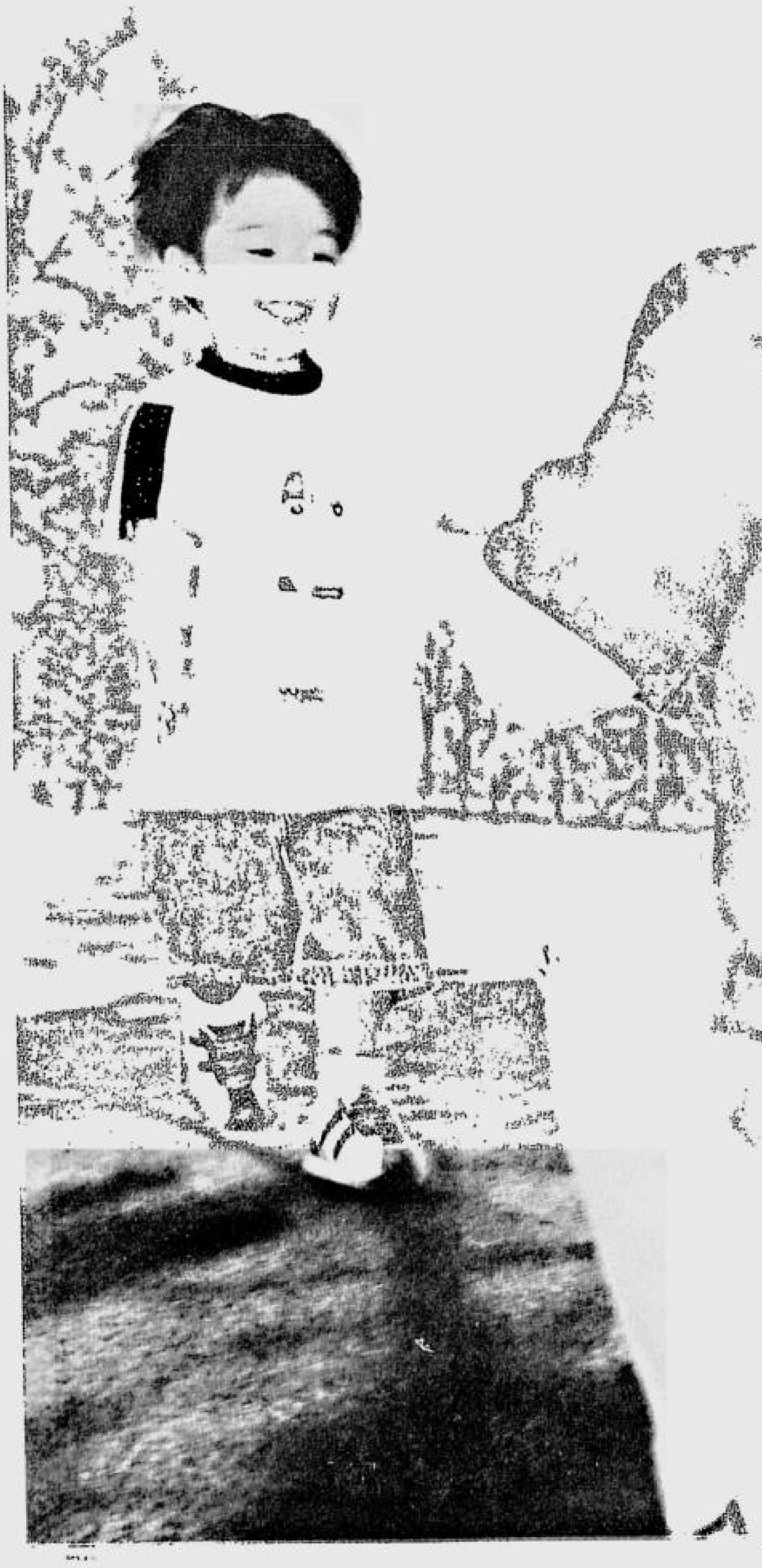

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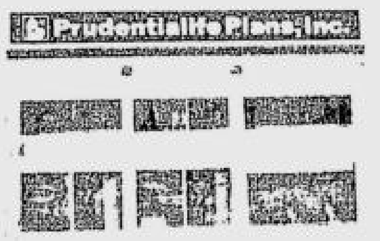

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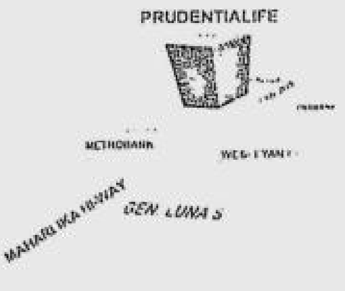

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WORLDBRIEFS

Haiti's new government sworn in

PORT-AU-PRINCE—Haiti's new government was sworn in Wednesday as gangs loyal to exiled ex-President Jean Bertrand Aristide handed in their weapons, raising hopes the Caribbean nation was recovering from its deep-seated political crisis. Prime Minister Gerard Latortue said the government he had formed was non-partisan and would be judged on its achievements. "The time has come to turn our backs on dictatorship," said Latortue, 69, at a ceremony at the national palace in which interim President Boniface Alexandre swore in the 13 new ministers. Latortue told AFP at the ceremony that Dominique de Villepin would visit Haiti this month, the first visit by a French foreign minister since Haiti gained independence from France 200 years ago. *AFP*

Israel kills 4 Palestinians

GAZA—Israel killed four Palestinians in two missile strikes into a Gaza refugee camp on Wednesday, pursuing what it called a relentless offensive against militants after two suicide bombers struck a strategic Israeli port. Israeli military action against militants and their leaders unfolded on Tuesday when three helicopter missiles hit the house of an Islamic Jihad commander in Gaza City. Two Palestinians died, one a militant. The commander escaped with minor injuries. Fighting flared in the Rafah refugee camp after the air strikes as troops backed by tanks and bulldozers demolished at least 16 houses, coming under rifle fire from militants, witnesses said. The army said it had been searching for arms-smuggling tunnels but found none before pulling out after dark. The raids followed an Israeli Cabinet decision on sustained military action after suicide bombers killed 10 people at the port of Ashdod on Sunday. The bombing unnerved Israelis because Palestinian attackers slipped out of Gaza for the first time in nearly three and a half years of conflict. *Reuters*

Bush, Kerry fight it out over Iraq, terror

WASHINGTON—Iraq and the war on terrorism took center-stage Wednesday in the US presidential election battle between Republican incumbent George W. Bush and the Democrats' John Kerry. With the devastating bomb blast in Baghdad casting a shadow over Bush's aim to use the first anniversary of the invasion of Iraq to hail his efforts, Kerry said the president had left the US military too weak. But Vice President Dick Cheney took up the Republican offensive against the Democratic senator saying Kerry had shown only "contempt" for US allies. Kerry launched what he called "the opening of the general election debate about the direction of our country" after clinching the delegates needed to assure victory in the Democratic nomination race. An easy win in the Illinois state primary on Tuesday took Kerry past the 2,162 delegates needed to win the formal nomination at the party convention in Boston on July 26-29. *AFP*

Hope fades in Russia blast rescue

ARKHANGELSK, Russia—Hope faded Thursday of rescuers finding survivors in the ruins of a nine-story apartment block whose entire side crumbled following a gas leak blast that has claimed at least 52 lives. The emergencies ministry put the latest toll at 52 after the body of a woman was discovered in the rubble late Wednesday. Twelve people were still hospitalized, including five in serious condition. Earlier the bodies of eight children, one woman and two men were pulled from beneath the shattered gray slabs of concrete and grim rescue workers in this industrial White Sea port town said they were losing hope more than 36 hours after Russia's latest tragedy. *AFP*

Turkish Cypriot leader to boycott talks

NICOSIA—Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash said Wednesday he had decided to boycott four-way talks on a UN reunification plan for Cyprus, between Turkish and Greek Cypriots, Greece and Turkey, due to start in Switzerland next week. The hardline veteran leader said he would shun the talks because he believed no progress would be possible due to what he called the intransigence of the Greek Cypriot side. Denktash's decision was a blow to his patrons in Turkey, who took the initiative in jumpstarting the peace process on the island last month and cajoled the reluctant Denktash into returning to the negotiating table. *AFP*

Spain bomb suspects face court; PM-elect rejects Bush appeal

MADRID—Five men arrested in connection with Madrid's suspected al-Qaida bombings appear in court on Thursday as Spain hunts for links between the men and Islamic militants abroad.

Three Moroccans and two Indians face a closed-door preliminary hearing at what the government says is a "decisive phase" in the inquiry into Western Europe's worst guerrilla attack, which killed 201 and injured more than 1,750 a week ago.

The blasts helped provoke a major election upset, ushering in a Socialist leader who has vowed to stand by a pledge to pull Spain's troops from Iraq despite US calls to stay the course.

Incoming Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero branded a "fiasco" the occupation of Iraq which was backed by outgoing Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar despite huge public opposition.

His critics say Spain's withdrawal would hand victory to the attackers and a new letter signed by a group that has claimed responsibility for the bombs will give critics fresh ammunition.

"Praise be to God who gave us this victory in the conquest of Madrid ... where one of the pillars of the axis of Crusader evil was destroyed," said a statement signed by the Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades, which claims links to al-Qaida.

The letter, sent to a pan-Arab newspaper on Wednesday, said the group was calling a Europe-wide truce until it knew Zapatero's intentions over Iraq, where a suspected al-Qaida car bomb killed 27 people in Baghdad on Wednesday.

Zapatero, who opposed the conflict, was trailing in the polls before the Madrid blasts on four commuter trains, which Aznar instantly blamed on Basque separatists ETA.

Outrage over Aznar's handling of the attack and a revival of public opposition to the Iraq war swept Zapatero to power. He takes office next month.

Spain is still reeling from the blasts and emotions will run high on Thursday as commuters make the same early train journeys that were hit exactly one week ago and a tribute is held for victims at Madrid's busy Atocha station.

Police are hunting some 20 Moroccans, who may also be linked to last May's Casablanca attack in which 45 people died. *Reuters*

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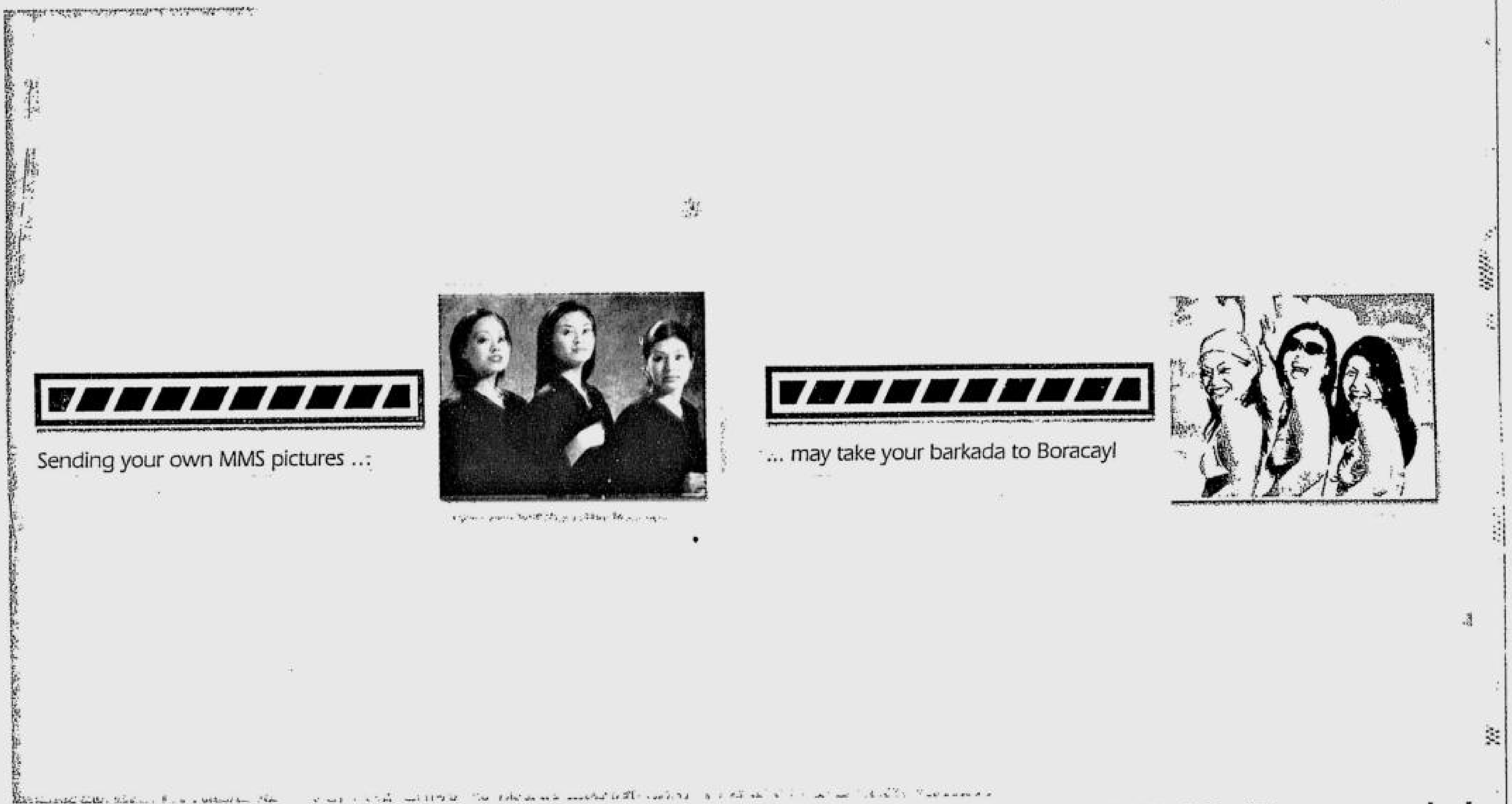

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EDITORIALS

About face

ELEVEN years after Russia restored the ownership of private property, the People's Republic of China has followed suit. The fundamental difference, of course, is that Russia did so after the collapse of the Soviet Union, while China remains officially socialist. The steps toward the rehabilitation of some aspects of capitalist practice build on previous constitutional amendments, such as that of 1999, when private business was declared an "important component" of the economy.

The amendment, one of 13 such changes, approved on March 15 states that "private property obtained legally is inviolable." It is considered an important legacy of former President Jiang Zemin, whose "Three Represents" principles assert the need for the Communist Party to attract entrepreneurs and businessmen into its orbit to protect the party's political and social preeminence. This is, then, the latest step in the process of innovation begun by the late Deng Xiaoping, who began weaning China away from the strict socialist principles of Mao Zedong.

Wen Ziabao, the present president of China, presided over the ritual ratification by the National People's Congress, which has further strengthened the political hegemony of the Chinese Communist Party, while further institutionalizing the transformation of China into an increasingly competitive capitalist marketplace. It took about a year for the amendment allowing private property for the first time since 1949 to be proposed and then adopted. There is already speculation among foreign observers that the Chinese government will next create structures for business practices such as trading property or stocks and bonds, offering protection under the law already given, in many ways, to foreign investors. As it is, the amendment will bring closer the day when credit can be extended to entrepreneurs who put up their properties as collateral for loans.

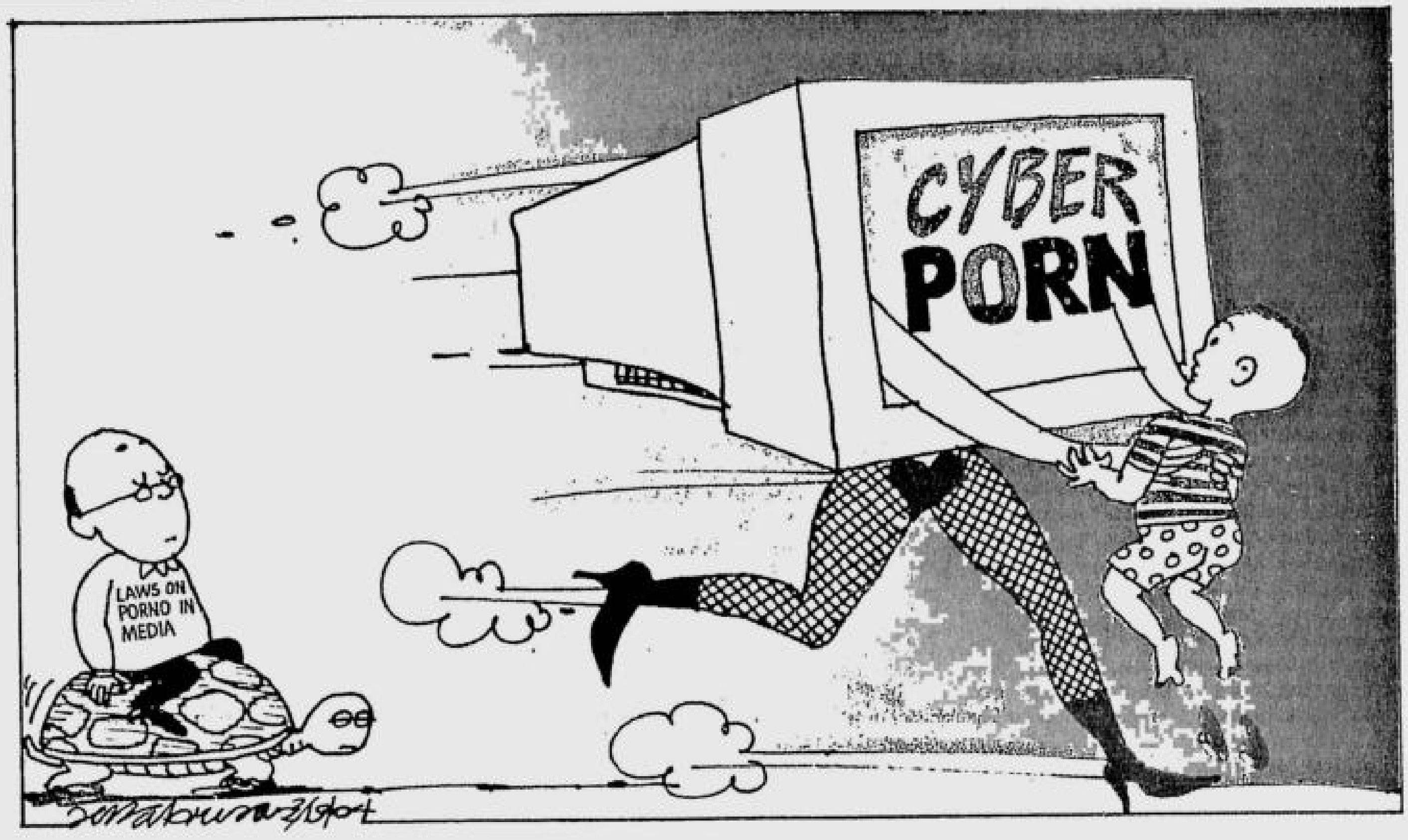
What is clear is that China has given tacit recognition to the importance of its emerging and fast growing entrepreneurial class and even the new class of extremely wealthy tycoons created under China's "socialism with Chinese characteristics," which has been echoed by similar trends in Vietnam, and the beginnings of modest experiments with entrepreneurship in Cuba. At the same time this only indicates the increasingly anachronistic nature of the Communist Party of the Philippines, and of socialists in the country in general, who are becoming one of the last holdouts for pure state-controlled socialist economies in the world.

Emergence

ANOTHER constitutional amendment made by China's People's National Congress was a muted recognition of the importance of human rights, without however, offering either an enumeration of those rights or a guarantee to protect them. The amendment as it stands only indicates efforts by the Communist Party to define rights according to the pragmatic considerations of the party, paramount of which is to preside over the evolution of China from a strict socialist regime to a mixed socialist-capitalist single party state. In other words, the transformation of China from a revolutionary state honoring Marx and Mao to one which has a "socialist democracy" that would be familiar to the Confucian single-party state that is Singapore.

The leadership of China is undertaking a delicate balancing act that is trying to promote phenomenal economic growth as a means of staving off a rising social and political awareness that is a response of that growth. As the leadership has mastered the art of orderly transitions of power (two successions have already taken place relatively smoothly and peacefully since Deng Xiaoping's time), so has it mastered the ability to be more politically proactive, instead of reactive, the limitations of which were demonstrated at Tiananmen square in 1989. While the Chinese government's authoritarian nature from time to time becomes glaringly—and clumsily—obvious, as was the case during the outbreak of SARS, it is becoming more adept at crisis management.

What remains to be seen is if managed and incremental change, as shown by the "recognition" of human rights, is enough. As China begins to show more and more signs of moving to the center, so to speak, in terms of governmental policies and norms, it is interesting to consider the effects this will have on those who originally found an inspiration in a socialist China that is increasingly a thing of the past.



Who is the smartest one of all?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IT looks like there will be only two presidential candidates who will participate in the anticipated debate: former Education Secretary Raul Roco and Bro. Eddie Villanueva. Fernando Poe Jr. has said he is not participating. President Macapagal-Arroyo does not want to join if FPJ is not there. And Sen. Panfilo Lacson does not want to join if GMA is not there. The sixth candidate, Eddie Gil, has just been disqualified by the Commission on Elections.

FPJ and GMA have been accused of cowardice, but I think the real reason is that they're smarter than the others. Here's why:

The two of them are the frontrunners in the opinion polls. They have nothing to gain but everything to lose in a debate because they are already leading. As frontrunners, the others will concentrate their fire on them to cut them down.

FPJ is specially vulnerable. He is a neophyte. He has no background in public administration. He has no experience. He has not held any public office. He is not a veteran public speaker like the others, much less a debater. All his previous public utterances were read from scripts. So why should he join a debate? It is a trap for him.

As the incumbent, GMA will attract the most criticisms. All the ills of government and society will be heaped on her head even if they're not deserved. Indeed, that is what Lacson intends to do. That is why he wants her to be there; she would be his target. He hopes to raise his ranking at the expense of GMA.

That is also what GMA intends to do to FPJ, advance in rank at his expense. That is why she insists that he be there. She gains nothing if FPJ is not there to be cut down to size.

But she runs the risk of being cut down to size herself by the others. So why take the risk? She is in front already. FPJ is her rival. If FPJ won't be there, what use would the debate be for her?

On the other hand, the benefit would be for those who are behind in the surveys. They have everything to gain and nothing to lose in the debate. They are already behind, so they can only move up.

Roco has the advantage in the debate. He is a veteran public speaker. He participated in many debates in Congress. He is an accomplished lawyer and an experienced public administrator. He can make mince meat of FPJ and the others. That is why he is eager for the debate.

Brother Eddie is also a veteran public speaker. That is what he does for a living; he does it every day. Being a preacher, preaching, and therefore also debating, is first nature to him. He would be in his element.

And being behind in the surveys, he also has nothing to lose but everything to gain. And I am sure he will make a good account of himself, being a former activist.

As for Lacson, he is carrying the baggage of the Kuratong Baleleng massacre as well as the other charges heaped on him. None of them has been proven; still they are baggage because he has not been acquitted of the charges either.

He may also be at a disadvantage in a debate because of this baggage and because he doesn't have as much experience in debating and public administration as Roco. His public experience has been mostly in military and police work.

Still, he may be able to advance in the rankings if he performs well in the debate. But with GMA absent, he would have no target. There will be nobody to blame for the mess in the government and society. Roco and Villanueva cannot be blamed for that. They are not yet in Malacañang. Lacson will have to weigh the advantages and disadvantages very carefully.

But who is the smartest one of them all? Would you believe, Eddie Gil?

With nothing (not even real hair) but only hot air and saliva, he lands in media. With only empty words, he lands on the front pages and primetime TV daily. Even with such a preposterous boast that he would pay the trillions of pesos of Philippine foreign debt and give every Filipino P1 million each, the Comelec initially qualified him as a presidential candidate. And even after the Comelec disqualified him as a nuisance candidate, he will continue to be in the news, perhaps until the elections, as he continues to fight his case all the way to the Supreme Court. Obviously, he wants the publicity.

Gil may not win in the elections, but he will still emerge a winner.

* * *

Many people find it hard to understand why Lacson refuses to withdraw from the presidential race so that the opposition can be united and have better chances of capturing Malacañang. With a divided opposition, GMA may be reelected. And then the persecution of Lacson will continue. The Arroyo couple will not forgive him for the Jose Pidal exposé.

Lacson's condition that FPJ should slide down to be his running mate people find preposterous. The actor is far ahead of him in the surveys, so Lacson should be the one to slide down or to withdraw. If he helps Da King win, the new administration will look kindly at him and that could be the end of his Calvary. Moreover, Da King may anoint him as the next presidential candidate. To most people, this is the logical thing to do.

But you have to understand that things look very different on the campaign trail.

You see the big crowds at the political rallies, you encounter so many people who reach out to touch you and hug you, you hear all the endorsements and praises, you hear all the assurances that "we here are solid for you" and you ask yourself: How can I lose with all these people supporting me? So if you are the candidate, why will you withdraw?

Grave

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I'M glad Jose Vicente Salazar and a team of lawyers from Raul Roco's camp have filed disqualification charges against Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for misusing public funds to campaign. Our stories have dutifully carried the word "allegedly" before "misusing public funds" but there is nothing alleged about it. It's in-your-face.

Salazar says GMA has already exceeded the 120 minutes of television advertising time allowed for each candidate. She has already logged 189 minutes, consisting of 242 half-minute spots, in various stations from Feb. 10 to March 11. It is now more than a week since March 11, so the total should be higher now. That does not include the PCSO ads, which are campaign ads for her.

But the last is taken care of by a case filed by Frank Chavez et al. also seeking GMA's disqualification on that ground. Specifically, Chavez et al., charge that GMA has used public funds for private ends through: the PhilHealth and PCSO cards that carry her picture, agricultural and health subsidies to non-existent farms, road works that promote her personally, and the Study Now, Pay Later program. The lawyers, who all belong to the Alliance of Hope, have a special reason to be pissed off with the last. It doesn't just rip off the taxpayer, it rips off their presidential standard-bearer, Raul Roco, who drafted the Study Now, Pay Later program for Ninoy Aquino.

Pro-Gloria readers are probably bound to say that this is just being negative and destructive rather than positive and constructive, cynical and faultfinding rather than optimistic and bullish. But I cannot imagine anything more negative and destructive than being indifferent or resigned to something so glaringly wrong. I cannot imagine anything more cynical and defeatist than accepting—no, embracing—something so epically iniquitous.

I remember late last year, while talking to people about the relative chances of the candidates, that I kept hearing this: GMA had a good chance to win despite her rivals' popularity and her own unpopularity because she wasn't going to allow herself to lose. She was the incumbent, she had resources. Clearly, she was going to use government money to fund her campaign. Coupled with cheating, that may be enough for her to pull through.

I have since heard that repeated many times, and more and more with a sense of assurance. What astounds me is the ease with which it is said. It makes the use of public funds to campaign and even cheating a natural expectation, like the rising and setting of the sun. It makes ripping off the taxpayer and the voter the most natural thing in the world, like a sunflower's smile and a baby's breath. It takes the opprobrium and stigma out of such patent wrongdoing, and makes it appear, through a tone of world-weary knowledgeableness, as though one can only be too naïve to believe things like this cannot happen.

Well, here's news, people: these things may not be allowed to happen.

GMA's officials have defended this by saying that government does not stop simply because there are elections. Their point being that government must continue to inform the public about its programs even during the campaign. Correct, government does not stop simply because there are elections, but government is simply not GMA. More so now than at any time in the past since GMA is there only on sufferance.

By all means let government continue to advertise its programs. But why should it advertise its campaign to give indigents health care with Honeygirl de Leon telling us that comes from the goodness of her boss' heart? Why should it advertise its campaign to fight drugs and repair roads with huge signs telling us that comes from the goodness of GMA's soul? Why should it advertise any and all of what it does with a picture of GMA grinning from ear to ear dwarfing the rest of the billboard itself?

Will the disappearance of GMA's face and name from those signs, posters, billboards, radio plugs, TV plugs, detract from the merits of the programs? Not at all. It will improve it. At the very least, it will tell the taxpayer that these projects will continue whoever sits in Malacañang because it is his money that makes it possible, he has a natural claim to it. At the very most, it will improve the aesthetics of the landscape. Not having someone grinning from ear to ear surrounding you is relief of wondrous proportions.

I do not know why the other candidates and what remains of civil society that hasn't been bought shouldn't unite and raise a hue and cry over this. Maybe it's true, as Eddie Villanueva says, that it would take a miracle for the Comelec to disqualify GMA on the ground of misusing public funds even if it's obvious. But miracles have been known to happen. If they did not, GMA would not be there doing those things now. Edsa II was one. And in any case, as Edsa II also shows, there is an authority higher than the Comelec, or the Supreme Court, or government itself. That is the people.

This is a formidable case of corruption, and it is obvious. We let it pass, we might as well ignore all the anti-corruption vows and promises any and all of the candidates are saying. They will be farcical. No, let us forget about fighting corruption itself. It won't happen. We allow the President to ransack the public treasury to campaign, we will allow the President to ransack the public treasury for whatever reason when she remains President. What are we saying there but that we have no control over our taxes, that the public treasury is the private deposit of the person in Malacañang, that whatever road repair and food subsidy we get comes from the benevolence of Mr. and Mrs. Jose Pidal?

The only reason we're lying in a grave is that we keep digging one.

More of the same nonsense

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

VICE PRESIDENT Teofisto Guingona Jr. has grabbed the spotlight of political news following his announcement that he was backing opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

Guingona's decision was not really an earth-shaking event that can redraw the landscape of the presidential campaign where President Macapagal-Arroyo and Poe are now locked in a head-to-head confrontation. Although the handlers of Poe swiftly claimed that Guingona's shift would trigger a massive snowball effect and infuse new life in Poe's sputtering campaign, there is nothing in the event that could break the stalemate.

The fact that Guingona's shuffle has grabbed the headlines during the last few days indicates that the election campaign has run out of hard news. If it were not for the terrorist bombing in Madrid, which merited front-page treatment, newspaper readers would have experienced the tedium of stories centered on the debates that Poe has persistently dodged.

The break of Guingona from the President on account of fundamental differences over the expansion of joint Philippine-US military exercises is old hat. Guingona's resignation from the ruling Lakas-Christian-Muslim Democrats was a logical consequence of his foreign policy break with the President. Thus, his announcement that he would join the Poe campaign in the capacity as adviser on governance and public policy—one among more than a dozen others on a wide range of expertise—was anti-climactic.

Guingona came under wide criticism for his decision. The criticism has bothered him so much and has put him on the defensive, prompting him to take pains to explain his decision. But the more he explains, the more it becomes clear that his arguments are not persuasive. The question now is whether his shift will add more brain power to the Poe campaign or he is being used by Poe to make up for his deficiencies.

According to Guingona, he was asked by Poe to help him in the campaign. He said he put forward the platform of Bangon, Guingona's political movement, and Poe agreed to incorporate it into his platform. Clearly, Guingona's collaboration with Poe is short-term. The objective is merely to deny the presidency to Ms Macapagal. Guingona is not clear about what his role will be in a Poe government.

Guingona's reforms do not make a novel package that can set the nation on fire. Its elements—except for the proposal to create a fund for Filipino overseas workers—have been proposed by would-be reformers, not excluding the President.

Guingona's program calls for the enactment of legislation banning political dynasties, greater autonomy for local officials, protection of the national patrimony, a strong campaign against graft and corruption and efforts to make Filipinos proud of themselves. The last element raises the question: Will the election of Poe make Guingona and the Filipinos proud of themselves or their country? Another question: Does Poe understand what Guingona means by protection of the national patrimony? A more important question calling for an answer: Is Poe the right person to implement a program, some of whose elements he scarcely understands?

Guingona is the architect of this reform package and knows about it more than any one else. Why does he need a surrogate to push it? In fact, because of his extensive political experience and his genuinely nationalistic economic and political policy positions—which contrast starkly with those of the President—it should have been Guingona challenging Ms Macapagal for the presidency, to give the voters a better policy alternative and option. So, Guingona is using Poe as his proxy or dummy to translate his programs into action, and Poe is using Guingona to give a little glitter of intelligence to his campaign.

The main reason Guingona did not run for the presidency, despite credentials that would enhance the substance of that high office, was that his chances of winning were dim. This realization of limited electoral appeal nationwide should also impress those who believe that Guingona's support would boost decisively Poe's electoral chances. Guingona's clout in the Lakas machine, which he has bolted, is non-existent. He cannot persuade any number of Lakas cadres to switch to the opposition camp, which at this late stage of the campaign can't even unite. True, Guingona has a constituency in the nationalist sector, but his sector has become so small since the time of the great nationalists like Claro M. Recto and Lorenzo Tañada, and electorally insignificant.

While I have admired the devotion of Recto, Tañada et al. (including Guingona) to the nationalist cause, I have grave doubts whether Poe is the proper vehicle for promoting nationalism, acting as Guingona's proxy or whether this constituency can swing the critical vote to make Poe win in this tight electoral race. It is clear that Guingona's support and program are wasted on Poe.

Guingona has claimed that his presence in the opposition camp has already made a difference. He says that because of his advice, Poe now talks longer in public speeches. He can now carry on for up to seven minutes. This is no mean feat, but seven minutes of nonsense do not really make a difference from a shorter speech. This merely adds a few minutes to the same nonsense.

Who's afraid of an empty chair?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I HOPE I'll be proven wrong, but Monday's forum on the presidential candidates' thoughts on "population, poverty and human development" might turn out to be more interesting not because of what the candidates will say, but because of what they won't be saying, because most of them will be no-shows.

I'm afraid that by the time I and the other panelists face the TV cameras, we'll be confronted by more empty chairs than candidates, although we've been assured that Raul Roco and Eddie Villanueva at least still intend to participate in this "Tapatan sa Halalan." Still, it may not be too late for the others—President Macapagal-Arroyo, Fernando Poe Jr. and Panfilo Lacson—to change their minds and show up at Studio 1 of ABS-CBN on Monday evening.

Rep. Krisel Lagman-Luistro, treasurer of the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD), one of the sponsors of this activity, together with Pulse Asia, the Philippine Political Science Association and ABS-CBN, has issued a public statement decrying the latest wrinkle in the preparations for the "Tapatan," the first of the presidential candidates' debates approved by the Comelec.

"The domino effect of President Arroyo's refusal to engage in the debate without FPJ… (and the consequent backtracking of Sen. Ping Lacson)… will ultimately put the people at the losing end," said the congresswoman. "*Tayo ang lugi dahil hindi na natin makikilatis ang kanilang posisyon* (We are on the losing end because we can no longer scrutinize their positions)."

She likens the "debate" to "an interview that job applicants have to undergo to enable employers to critically evaluate whether or not they are qualified for the position they are applying for. Candidates who refuse to participate in a debate are like job applicants who do not want or are afraid to face an interview. The extraordinary job of the president demands that the candidates for the position submit themselves to strict evaluation by the electorate because should the elected president fail to faithfully and effectively discharge his/her mandate, the people will suffer."

* * *

I CAN well understand why candidates for both national and local office would prefer to face the voting public under conditions largely under their control. In stage shows and rallies, for instance, they can keep the exchanges at a minimum, avoiding pesky interrogators and awkward questions while dazzling supporters with the usual elements of electoral campaign hoopla: catchy jingles, female (or male) dancers in skimpy attire, and an adoring crowd more interested in green jokes and funny one-liners than a candidate's plans once he or she is in office. It's all very entertaining and the crowd goes home warmed by memories of a free show. But will they have a better idea of who among the candidates is more deserving of their votes? I doubt it.

That's why the televised debates and in-depth interviews on public affairs shows perform such a valuable service. These provide voters a chance to listen at length to candidates, to gauge the quality of their minds and characters and the soundness of their platforms and plans, and may well educate them on the real issues at stake in this exercise.

And with all the candidates standing together, subject to the same pressures and responding to the same questions, voters have a chance to carefully and comprehensively compare each one with the others, without the distractions offered by cheering squads and nubile performers.

* * *

WE all know the problems FPJ has with articulating his thoughts and expounding at length on his plans for governance (if any), which is why he has scrupulously avoided as much as he can any extended exposure on media. In his experience so far, the more he has talked, the more he's gotten into trouble.

But FPJ's continued dodges, a display of cowardice that has cost him a lot in terms of standing with the voters (what kind of hero would duck a fight even before it's begun?) while understandable, cannot be used by GMA as an excuse for her own silence. As Lagman-Luistro says: "Why should the President hinge her decision on the attendance or non-attendance of Mr. Poe? Should not her sole consideration be her own appraisal of the importance of informing the Filipino people of her position on issues of overriding national significance? If Mr. Poe does not want the electorate to know what his stand is, why should she also deny the people the opportunity to know her own position in the furnace of open confrontation rather than in a self-serving monologue?"

FPJ, at least, has his inarticulateness and political inexperience as convenient excuses. The President can very well explain her positions on issues of national import, and indeed, as the incumbent, it is her duty to explain her administration's performance and her future plans and policies. Indeed, by letting Poe dictate the terms of her appearances, it is the President's dignity that has been damaged, and it is entirely self-inflicted.

* * *

AND what about Senator Lacson? He may style himself after such "strong and decisive" regional leaders like Lee Kuan Yew, Mahathir Mohamad and Thaksin Shinawatra, but ducking a debate because the frontrunners have backed out is no way to prove one's steely backbone. Only that one is *gaya-gaya*.

Who's afraid of an empty chair? It's not an affront to whoever among the candidates shows up. Instead, it can be seen as an eloquent testament to the courage of those who choose to participate, since the empty chair could symbolize any number of meanings: cowardice, arrogance, ignorance, sloth. Against the empty chairs, the candidates who show up will stand out in comparison.

Family size and the poor

COMMENTARY

John J. Carroll, S.J.,
Institute on Church and Social Issues

ABOUT a year ago, I wrote about the 290 baptisms performed in Our Lady of Divine Providence Parish in Payatas, Quezon City, on Christmas Day. While sharing the pleasure of the proud parents, I wondered how many of those little "bundles of joy" would be in our feeding program for third-degree malnourished infants within a year or two.

Recently there was an indication that the problem runs deeper still. In a group of 10 couples who had come to be instructed in natural family planning (NFP), five of the mothers had themselves been in our feeding program as youngsters. They are now aged 15 to 18, with one to three children each, some of the children unbaptized and without the birth certificates which will be necessary for enrolling them in school. Their husbands are gasoline boys, truck helpers, etc. Disturbing evidence of a hereditary proletariat.

We do not know how many siblings these young parents had as they were growing up, so we cannot immediately conclude that their continued poverty is a consequence of family size. Other factors were surely involved, and those who would blame a single cause for poverty are obviously oversimplifying and deserve not to be trusted.

On the other hand, there is good evidence that large family size makes it difficult for families to move out of poverty. Many children mean more competition within the family for food, education and health services, for the attention of the parents, and, within the community, for low-skilled jobs. To be sure, some parents may wish to have many children as "insurance" against their old age, but at most this ensures survival at a subsistence level.

We do not have data from Payatas on family size, though frequently I hear of scavengers with seven children or more. On the other hand, we do have figures on the ages of household members who have been relocated from the depressed flood-prone area of Camanava (Caloocan-Malabon-Navotas-Valenzuela) to three sites in Bulacan. A sample survey done among the more than 7,200 relocated households indicates that the median age (the age which divides the population equally into an older and a younger group) in mid-2003 was 17 years, four years younger than the national medium of 21 years. Those 14 years old and younger made up 45.4 percent of the population. Coupled with high unemployment and mainly semi-skilled jobs, this means a very heavy burden on working-age adults, and a scarcity of resources available to the young.

The 10 couples mentioned above are fortunate, in that they are being introduced while they are still young to NFP. We have a program there, with three trainers who themselves have been prepared by Sr. Pilar Verzosa, R.G.S., and more than 90 actively practicing it, some using the Billings Method and an increasing number using the simpler Standard Days Method. The program "rides on" the feeding program for malnourished infants, since the parents of the latter are an obvious target, and I have been surprised at the acceptance which it has received. Some of the husbands are reluctant to abstain during the fertile period; those in the group mentioned above agreed to do so but asked that they be given two weeks "to get ready"! Others are quite willing, saying "the pill is why our wives are always sick" or even "the pill is why our wives have tuberculosis"!

These latter reactions remind us that, for many, the chief advantage of NFP is precisely that it is natural as well as inexpensive, with no side-effects. This is significant because the great majority of the poor are not regular churchgoers. Even at Payatas, most of the mothers in our feeding program are not churchgoers, and Sunday Mass attendance is probably less than 3 percent of the population. They know little of the Church's teaching and see family planning as purely a technical matter.

The tragedy, however, is that our NFP program is reaching so few: 90 couples out of the 10,000 households in Payatas B alone. And that the Church, while vigorously opposing distribution of contraceptives by the government and refusing to collaborate with the latter even in NFP, seems unable to develop a program of its own which is proportionate to the need. As a result, 33 years after the Church withdrew from the government's Population Commission, it becomes increasingly difficult to hold back a vigorous population control program on the part of government which could have little regard for freedom of conscience or the position of the Church.

The reader will note that I am not speaking of a "population problem" for the national economy, but of a "family size problem" among the poor. There are many steps which could be taken to boost the national economy other than population control (one thinks immediately of eliminating corruption and the wastage of "pork barrel" funds, of improving tax collection and getting the politics out of economic policy, of improving the educational and health levels of the people and developing infrastructure in the rural areas). But even with the best of intentions (which is not to be presumed), these steps will take time.

In the meantime, unless something is done about family size among the poor, the tragedies of childhood malnutrition, street children and child laborers will continue. On this, history and the Lord of history can be unforgiving.

A congressional seat for overseas Filipinos?

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

DID you know that Philippine elections have started? Last week, Filipino seafarers deployed abroad began to cast their votes at certain designated cities, the first of overseas Filipinos who will benefit from a new absentee voting law passed last year.

We're not the only country that allows absentee voting. Our newspapers occasionally carry announcements from foreign embassies in Manila, calling on their citizens to vote in their elections. For Americans, the calls to vote don't just come from their embassies but from political parties. Thus, you have groups like Democrats Abroad calling on American Democrats to vote.

Expatriates (people living outside their home country) are beginning to recognize their political clout. This year, liberal American expats seem even more intent on exercising their vote to get Bush out of the White House. A group called American Voices Abroad (AVA) brings together different civil rights and anti-war groups in a "100,000 for 2004" campaign, aiming to get 100,000 American expats to pledge that they will vote only for candidates who will fight Bush's doctrine of pre-emptive war and the US Patriot Act. The doctrine of pre-emptive war was used, almost exactly a year ago, to justify the invasion of Iraq, with the idea that war was needed to pre-empt war. (Figure that out.)

But the "100,000 for 2004" campaign may be in for hard times because there are more Republicans than Democrats among American expats. In fact, the Republicans' absentee votes were said to have been a major factor in helping Bush win in the last elections—if, of course, one believes he won fairly, since there are still allegations his victory involved vote-fixing.

American expats apparently exert political clout, even if there are only six to seven million of them. We have about the same number of Filipinos living overseas, but it is disappointing that only 300,000 registered to vote, with greater turnouts from places like Hong Kong, and cold responses outright from Filipinos in the United States.

American expats aren't content with absentee voting. Ten years ago, a bill was introduced in the US Congress to allow one seat in the US House of Representatives for expats. The bill has never even made it to the floor for a vote, which leaves the States lagging behind many other Western countries that do allow their expatriates representation in their legislative bodies. An article two weekends ago in the International Herald Tribune gives a few examples of this representation:

The French's two million citizens living overseas have four representatives in the French Senate, with proposals to increase the number to 12. These seats have been there since 1946.

Italy allows up to eight Italians living abroad to sit in their parliament while Portugal allocates four parliamentary seats, two for Portuguese expats living in Europe and two for those living elsewhere in the world.

Switzerland allows expatriates to run for parliament in any of the country's 26 cantons (a loose equivalent of a state or province) but no one has yet won because of the difficulties in campaigning long distance. The expatriates have, however, proposed that a 27th canton be created for overseas Swiss, with two seats in Parliament.

Will we ever get to that point in the Philippines? I think the closest we've gotten to representation in our own Congress is the party-list system, which allows someone a seat if he or she gets more than 2 percent of the total votes. From what I recall of the last elections, there were several small parties running, supposedly representing the interests of overseas Filipinos. I don't know if anyone made it. But if they did, they don't seem to have had any impact because I have not read of any legislative initiatives working for overseas workers, coming from a party-list representative.

Yet, I can foresee how, in the future, Filipinos in the States might actually end up lobbying for representation in Congress. Now that dual citizenship is allowed, Filipinos in the States—although lukewarm to the call to register for absentee voting—just might come around to becoming more political. The last census in the States listed some two million Filipinos, about equivalent to the populations of some of our smaller provinces. Conceivably, our Amboys and Amgirls could clamor for a new "province" of their own, like Swiss expats are doing for a new canton.

At the rate computer technologies are developing, it's also possible that some Amboy or Amgirl member of Congress might continue to be based somewhere in the American Midwest, maybe Idaho, and yet participate in congressional deliberations through computer teleconferences.

With enough media savvy, such a character might even end up making it to Malacañang, with people looking back and wondering what the fuss was back in 2004 over the FPJ citizenship question.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

THEY SAID

Insult to voters

"It is an insult to the Filipinos to say voters don't look at the platform. The Filipinos are more mature now and we should not trivialize public office. This isn't 'Starstruck,' this is the Republic of the Philippines."

—Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, on Sen. Vicente Sotto's remark that Filipinos vote for a candidate's personality and not platforms

Economic necessity

"Some of us feel it's a disgrace, but we also recognize that it's driven by economic imperatives."

—Dr. Jose Ramirez of the Professional Regulation Commission's Board of Medicine, on doctors becoming nurses to be able to get jobs abroad

Tragic

"A bit of us died in the train."

—Spanish window-frame maker David, on the recent terrorist attack that killed hundreds in Spain

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Long-lost family relations

I AM writing from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA to tell you an amazing story.

I have been e-mailing with long lost relatives for about four years. The reason we were "long lost" is that my paternal grandfather, Elmero David, moved to America and there married an Irish Catholic woman in Louisiana. They had three children by 1935 and that same year he died at the age of 27 of TB. During the height of the Great Depression, there were few resources for a widow with three children to feed and clothe.

Over the years, my grandmother raised her children, my father Mauricio, his older brother Elmero Jr. and their young sister, Dolores, with little help from her community or family. As love will have it, my grandmother remarried another Filipino, Augustin Prado, 14 years later. They had one son, Augustin Jr.

I often spoke to my grandmother about her marrying two Filipino men. The first time, she said that it was love at first sight. The second time, she would say, was that it was again, love at first sight. She would say, with a twinkle in her eye, that the Filipino men "knew how to treat a woman." Blushing with my youth, I could only smile while imagining what she meant.

Sadly, we learned nothing of my David ancestors, other than they were from Leyte and that my grandfather was a musician. For all of my life, over 50 years now, I had given up any hope of ever finding these lost relatives. But, through the wonders of the Internet, about four years ago, I was contacted by a lady from California. She said that she was researching her David family tree and had reason to believe that we might be related. After a series of questions and answers, we determined that we were indeed related. Her mother and my grandfather were siblings.

Here is where the story becomes much more personal and wonderful. My family in the States now has much knowledge of our ancestors. We know about the family that waved goodbye to a son who was something of an adventurer, to leave a good teaching job to explore the oceans and the United States and to die without his parents' knowledge. That same family assumed that he was dead, but did not know when or how. We learned that we have cousins and second cousins in Cebu and great "Titas" and "Titos" both in the United States and in Leyte.

I am very enriched to now be communicating with my cousins and hope and pray that some day we will see one another. As denizens of this great planet Earth, we breathe the same air and are warmed by the same sun, but the day that I can embrace my kinfolk will be the day that I will feel much more complete.

Thank you for allowing me to share this story.

—CHERYL DAVID MARKS,
c/o LHermosilla@lineafina.com

Project costs and PNCC officials

THIS is with regard to the article which appeared in the Inquirer titled "PNCC eyes NDC funding for P7B tollway rehab." (PDI, 2/23/04) Allow us to clarify some of the points raised in the article.

The South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) project involves two phases: Phase 1 is composed of the construction of a two-lane toll road that will connect the SLEX from Calamba, Laguna to the Star Tollway in Sto. Tomas, Batangas; and Phase 2 is the repair and rehabilitation of the Alabang Viaduct. The rehabilitation of the portion from Alabang, Muntinlupa to Calamba, Laguna is included in Phase 2 which include other works.

The total project costs P2.3 billion (P1.6 billion including right-of-way acquisition for the extension project and P7 billion for the Alabang Viaduct) and not P7 billion as indicated in the article. The P1.6-billion tollway extension project is being implemented by the Philippine National Construction Corp. by virtue of Presidential Decree 1113 (as amended) and will initially be a two-lane tollway out of the six-lane ultimate design. The National Development Co. provides project financing through a loan for the road's construction including the right of way for the PNCC.

Presently, the PNCC holds inter-agency meetings with other agencies like the Department of Public Works and Highways, the NDC, the Toll Regulatory Board, the Metro Manila Development Authority and other concerned agencies to discuss various concerns including the financial, to the technical and, most importantly, the traffic management scheme, particularly for the repair of the Alabang Viaduct.

Secondly, we would also like to assure our motoring public that the Alabang Viaduct is not "in danger of collapsing" as written in the article.

As concluded by the E.S. De Castro and Associates Engineering Firm, the consulting agency hired by the PNCC to conduct the structural reinvestigation of the viaduct, in its full executive report submitted to the PNCC, said that the "Alabang Viaduct can still support the existing light vehicle traffic loading."

According to Esca, "the Alabang Viaduct has definitely weakened but it is in no danger of falling if we continue to prohibit the use of the structure by vehicles weighing 20 tons and above as a precautionary measure.

And lastly, the president and CEO of the PNCC is Rolando L. Macasaet. Luis Sision is the chair of the PNCC Skyway Corp., a fully owned subsidiary of the PNCC and operator of the Skyway System.

We hope that these clarify some of the concerns raised in the article.

—FELIPE C. ALDAY,
vice president and officer in charge,
Philippine National Construction Corp.,
Edsa cor. Reliance Street,
Mandaluyong City

Birds of the same mold

THE CAMPAIGN handlers of Fernando Poe Jr. recently released 19 names constituting FPJ's economic, legal and other policy advisers in a bid to calm the fear and uncertainties plaguing businessmen and other electoral stakeholders on their candidate. The same handlers, who incidentally were also part of the Estrada presidential campaign team, pulled the same stunt in 1998 by parading a list of academics who they said were advising and tutoring Estrada on policy issues concerning public administration and good governance, economic and fiscal reforms among others.

When Estrada was elected president, they then presented a so-called Council of Economic Advisers, a group of prominent businessmen who would supposedly provide advice on business, investment and trade concerns. Did any of these experts and learned men made any difference? Certainly not. Unable to probably comprehend the language of these experts and the theories and policy options they were providing, Estrada turned to a more familiar ground for advice: his midnight Cabinet.

FPJ can have as many policy experts advising him but if the recipient of such advice does not have the capacity to absorb and analyze the numerous and highly complex and technical issues involved, then such advice will be for naught. In FPJ's case, if elected president, he will eventually turn to a mix of show-biz friends and aging politicians for advice. Some people just don't get it. Some people refuse to learn from the past. You see, Estrada and FPJ really come from the same mold.

—FERDIE T. SIBAL,
18 Green Leaves St.,
Capitol Green Village,
Tandang Sora, Quezon City

Meanings and journalistic lapses

I FOUND Jeremias Canonizado's ("Exasperated faithful Inquirer subscriber," PDI, 2/14/04) comments timely. The lapses in journalism that he noted aren't limited to the Inquirer. I have noticed similar lapses in its competitors.

Many of the lapses involve spelling, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, tenses, plural and singular forms and sentence construction. To err in spelling is human. But as my high school teacher once told her class, an error in spelling is bound to change the meaning of a word. Subject-verb errors can change the meaning of a statement. Errors in plural and singular forms can also change the meaning of sentences. All these errors can lead to a faulty sentence construction.

The true mark of an educated citizen is the ability to be understood clearly in spoken and written language. Since good journalism lies in the ability to convey clear meaning (and also to educate), newspapers have the extremely serious task of preventing errors that may come out in the morning edition. Even a single error can have serious repercussions.

An example is the mistranslation of Pope John Paul II's 1996 speech on Biological Evolution. As evolution is commonly perceived as an example of the conflict between science and religion, the Pope's speech was a landmark statement.

In the translation of the Pope's speech by the Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano, what the French original meant as "more than *a* hypothesis" was translated into "more than *one* hypothesis" in English. Clearly, the meaning changed because of the error. "A" and "one" didn't carry the same meaning in the context of the Pope's speech. Scientists and theologians began to ask "What on earth does the Pope mean?" The Vatican newspaper had to publish an erratum.

Most of the Inquirer's readers are neither scientists nor theologians but ordinary citizens who have no time to debate on meanings over morning coffee. Fearless views mean nothing if these views are not communicated clearly.

—BENJAMIN VALLEJO JR., Ph.D.,
Science and Engineering,
Ateneo de Manila University,
Loyola Heights, Quezon City

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District III—April 2, 6 p.m. at Quirino 2A Covered Court
District Screening is on March 24
District IV—April 3, 6 p.m. at Galas Covered Court
District Screening is on March 25

Mutya ng Lungsod Quezon

Coronation night: April 24, 2004
Liwasang Aurora, Quezon Memorial Circle

Not same picture or guy

THE OFFICE of the President Mindanao and the Office of the President's Mindanao Peace and Development Fund (MPDF) wish to make it clear that the name and picture of one Virgilio Varona Leyretana Sr., formerly of Sun Life Management Company Inc., and Sun Life Prosperity Funds that appeared on Page A23 of the Inquirer last March 1, 2004, is not the same person as Virgilio Legarde Leyretana Sr., who serves as the deputy presidential assistant for Mindanao and concurrent undersecretary/executive director of the Mindanao Peace and Development Fund (MPDF).

—VIRGILIO L. LEYRETANA SR.,
deputy presidential assistant
for Mindanao,
undersecretary/
executive director, Mindanao Peace
and Development Fund, Office of the
President,
Malacañang, Manila

Kabayan's non-existent policies

ALLOW me to comment on the letter "Kabayan's cornerstone policy." (PDI, 2/2/04) The fact of the matter is that Noli de Castro has not filed any resolution in the Senate condemning the killings and the militarization of Mindoro where he comes from.

And what policy of Kabayan was the letter-writer, Isko Catibayan, talking about? De Castro has filed only two bills in the Senate since 1998 and they have nothing to do at all with poverty alleviation or the protection of human rights.

If at all, what De Castro did at the Senate was to use this institution as a venue to defend his bosses, the Lopezes, for Meralco's and Maynilad's overcharging of their consumers.

News reports would also show that while De Castro turned a blind eye on the killings happening in his own backyard, it was KNP vice-presidential candidate Loren Legarda who has consistently denounced not only the killings and human rights violations in Mindoro but elsewhere in the country.

For joining forces with President Macapagal-Arroyo, De Castro's hands are as bloody as those that pulled the trigger or wielded the knives that have snuffed many innocent lives under this administration.

—JIMMY ANDRADE,
2467 S. Osmeña Sr. Highway
Manila

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Sumali na kayo! Merong libreng medical at blood pressure check-up at mga piling gamot para sa inyo. Meron ding lecture tungkol sa kalusugan para sa mga matatanda. Maaari din kayong mag[illegible] data capture para sa inyong bagong SSS biometric card.

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[illegible]

Don't ban campaign posters on trees

IF trees were human beings, driving nails into trees to hold up campaign posters and the like would be extremely painful. I am not a tree specialist but from observation, I believe trees can withstand adverse situations well.

Gmelina trees continue to thrive in spite of quarterly cutting of their branches that reach Napocor lines; coconut trees survive even if farmers carve a three-inch deep foothold all the way to the top for climbing; rubber trees are de-barked regularly to extract rubber sap and yet seem to grow stronger.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources should consider this before banning campaign materials nailed to trees.

Meanwhile, let politicians post their campaign materials on trees along highways and focus their vigilance on illegal loggers.

—MANUEL B. JAPZON,
General MacArthur,
Eastern Samar

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Man killed in failed ambush on Ecija mayor

STA. ROSA, Nueva Ecija—A man who was allegedly waiting to ambush Mayor Marlon Marcelo near the town hall was shot and killed by the mayor's police escorts on Thursday morning.

Killed was Roger Ramirez, 28, said to be an employee of a chicken dressing plant here. Reports said Ramirez had been absent from work for several days before the incident.

Supt. Peter Guibong, Sta. Rosa police chief, said Ramirez threw a grenade at the pursuing policemen, but he was gunned down as he prepared to draw his gun.

The grenade exploded about 50 meters from the policemen, but no one was hurt.

Guibong said Ramirez and two other men positioned themselves in front of the main gate of the Holy Cross College compound at the town proper at about 7:30 a.m. But Marcelo and his escorts saw the suspects who were acting suspiciously.

Marcelo, who was aboard his Nissan Safari van, asked his escorts, PO1 Leo Santos and PO2 Jonathan Reyes, to check the three men. When the policemen alighted, the three suspects scampered to different directions.

Ramirez was killed a few meters from the police station behind the municipal hall.

Recovered from the scene was a .38 cal. revolver, fragments of the grenade, and a mobile phone.

Quibong said Marcelo was uneasy at that time and became extra alert.

Investigators were looking into politics as a motive, he said. Marcelo, a member of the Bagong Lakas ng Nueva Ecija, is running for reelection.

The town has been tagged by the Philippine National Police as an election hot spot. *Anselmo Roque with a report from Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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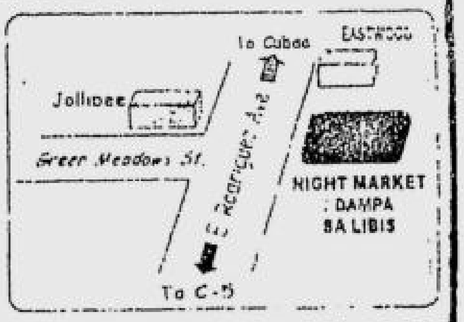

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Cops say 'jueteng' war not linked to slaying

ANGELES CITY—Police officials ruled out a renewed "jueteng" turf war in the murder of a whistle-blower on the illegal gambling operations in this city.

Two men gunned down Ruben Marin Jr. on Monday night while he was recuperating at the St. Catherine Hospital for a bullet wound in the buttocks.

On Sunday, Marin, 37, told investigators he was wounded when he accidentally fired his gun while inside Camp Belen, the base of the Military Intelligence Command, earlier that day.

Senior Supt. Jimmy Restua, Angeles police director, said Marin was worried over a land dispute with a relative. According to Restua, Marin made no reference to any problem concerning the illegal numbers game.

But Restua said Marin's claim on the cause of his previous wound was being verified.

Restua said the victim could have earned many enemies through his involvement in various illegal activities like extortion.

Marin's relatives said he worked as a *cabo* (jueteng manager) in northeastern Angeles areas including Barangay Pandan where he lived.

In March 2002, Marin exposed the operations of jueteng financier in the city, whose average net income was P2 million daily from 10 jueteng stations in Angeles alone.

That financier, based in San Fernando City, was displaced by another operator identified by the police and the city council only as "Panchito." This operator is said to be the "right hand man" of an Angeles official.

Marin reportedly managed to return to the trade when the Angeles operator gave concessions to a smaller operator named "Marga."

But as Marin exposed the details of the lucrative illegal trade, Sen. Panfilo Lacson and his arch rival Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya rushed to get him as a witness in a Senate hearing on jueteng.

Marin sought protection from the National Bureau of Investigation in Central Luzon and since then cut his contacts with the media.

On Wednesday, his relatives said they were planning to sue the hospital for its "lax security."

The hospital staff told reporters Marin introduced himself as a policeman.

The assassins entered through the front door of the hospital, the police said. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Shift of alliances makes Pampanga race interesting

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Pineda family, which has emerged as a strong political clan in Pampanga starting in the 1990s, has confirmed junking the opposition's vice gubernatorial bet for the administration party's candidate, Board Member Roseller "Yeng" Guiao.

Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda said his father, alleged "jueteng" lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, has no hand in the decision in what is now regarded as an uncanny tandem of Nationalist People's Coalition gubernatorial candidate Rep. Zenaida Cruz-Ducut and Guiao.

"My father has not meddled in politics. He's always away most of the time and busy with his businesses," Pineda said Wednesday in a telephone interview.

Pineda, the campaign manager of Ducut, said he reached the decision to replace former Vice Gov. Clayton Olalia about two weeks ago.

Olalia, according to Pineda, "consistently made poor showings" in local surveys.

Money was another issue but Pineda declined to talk about it at length.

"(Olalia) also (issued) denials or was very careful at not being associated with the Pinedas, as if we were a bad family. There was no friendship between us because I soon realized it was all about money," Pineda said.

Olalia could not be reached for comment. But one of his close supporters said it was Olalia who "left" the Pineda camp because Board Member Lilia Pineda, the mayor's mother, wanted to run for vice governor as substitute to Olalia.

Mayor Pineda denied that his mother had such a plan. He said Guiao, the son of the late Lakas stalwart and Pampanga Gov. Bren Guiao, had already been introduced to local organizers and supporters.

Guiao met some of them on Tuesday in Baguio City where a convention of barangay officials in the second district was held.

"We have given him (Guiao) our commitment," Pineda said.

Guiao, who confirmed the Pinedas' support, said he remained with Lakas. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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Unexploded bombs threaten safety of Pikit villages

COTABATO CITY—The greatest fear of families displaced by recent armed conflicts in Pikit, North Cotabato has come true.

On Tuesday, a dud explosive left during the Buliok war of 2003 went off, killing a farmer and seriously injuring his brother.

Eighteen-year-old Norhamin Toga said he and his elder brother Solayman, 22, were plowing their field when they hit the bomb, which was buried in the farm.

He said the explosion mangled Solayman's body.

"I think it was an 81 mm mortar," Norhamin said from his hospital bed here.

Peace advocates and groups working for the rehabilitation of areas torn by the war against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in February 2003 have been issuing appeals to both the military and the rebels to clear the villages of unexploded bombs.

They said unless these explosives were removed, the lives of the residents, who agreed to return to their villages, continue to be in danger.

Norhamin also aired the same appeal on Tuesday.

"I appeal to all concerned to look for similar bombs in our farmlands so that civilians would be spared from harm," he said.

Norhamin said he was now uncertain about their safety after the explosion.

"I'm afraid there are more unexploded bombs out there," he said.

Fr. Bert Layson, OMI, parish priest of Pikit, said the incident should compel both the government and the rebels to immediately clear the areas so that civilians would be safe.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said he was convinced that a number of unexploded bombs remain buried in war-torn villages of the complex.

But he quickly added it would be hard to determine which particular bomb soldiers and rebels fired.

But Kabalu agreed the government and the MILF should work together to protect the lives of civilians from threats of unexploded bombs.

He said those involved in the peace process could discuss moves to clear the villages.

Lt. Col. Julieto Ando, speaking for the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said military units now deployed in Pikit were under instruction to clear their areas of assignment of "unexploded armaments."

Pikit is under the jurisdiction of the 1st Marine Brigade. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

GMA health care program to reach Sorsogon farmers

SORSOGON CITY—It's the farmers turn to receive health benefits from the government.

In a recent orientation for provincial agrarian reform officers and chiefs of its Beneficiaries Development and Coordination Division in Mandaluyong City, the Department of Agrarian Reform launched its campaign to identify agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) nationwide that will qualify for the Greater Medicare Access (GMA), a health insurance program to be funded by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

Emerson Moral, provincial agrarian reform officer, said the program would benefit 3,955 ARBs in Sorsogon.

Reacting to criticisms that the GMA program is being used for President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign, Moral said they can take criticisms but "whenever we have the access to serve the less privileged, we will take it (sic)."

"I personally believe that basic health services should be availed (of) and granted to our less privileged (farmers). For me it's a noble program and the government should have long before looked into this. Health is a basic (human) right," Moral said.

He said the DAR is waiting for the PCSO to implement the project since it is providing the local government units with health services first. *Emir Emano Gamis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Unexploded bombs threaten safety of Pikit villages

COTABATO CITY—The greatest fear of families displaced by recent armed conflicts in Pikit, North Cotabato has come true.

On Tuesday, a dud explosive left during the Buliok war of 2003 went off, killing a farmer and seriously injuring his brother.

Eighteen-year-old Norhamin Toga said he and his elder brother Solayman, 22, were plowing their field when they hit the bomb, which was buried in the farm.

He said the explosion mangled Solayman's body.

"I think it was an 81 mm mortar," Norhamin said from his hospital bed here.

Peace advocates and groups working for the rehabilitation of areas torn by the war against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in February 2003 have been issuing appeals to both the military and the rebels to clear the villages of unexploded bombs.

They said unless these explosives were removed, the lives of the residents, who agreed to return to their villages, continue to be in danger.

Norhamin also aired the same appeal on Tuesday.

"I appeal to all concerned to look for similar bombs in our farmlands so that civilians would be spared from harm," he said.

Norhamin said he was now uncertain about their safety after the explosion.

"I'm afraid there are more unexploded bombs out there," he said.

Fr. Bert Layson, OMI, parish priest of Pikit, said the incident should compel both the government and the rebels to immediately clear the areas so that civilians would be safe.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said he was convinced that a number of unexploded bombs remain buried in war-torn villages of the complex.

But he quickly added it would be hard to determine which particular bomb soldiers and rebels fired.

But Kabalu agreed the government and the MILF should work together to protect the lives of civilians from threats of unexploded bombs.

He said those involved in the peace process could discuss moves to clear the villages.

Lt. Col. Julieto Ando, speaking for the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said military units now deployed in Pikit were under instruction to clear their areas of assignment of "unexploded armaments."

Pikit is under the jurisdiction of the 1st Marine Brigade. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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See posters for details

GMA health care program to reach Sorsogon farmers

SORSOGON CITY—It's the farmers turn to receive health benefits from the government.

In a recent orientation for provincial agrarian reform officers and chiefs of its Beneficiaries Development and Coordination Division in Mandaluyong City, the Department of Agrarian Reform launched its campaign to identify agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) nationwide that will qualify for the Greater Medicare Access (GMA), a health insurance program to be funded by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

Emerson Moral, provincial agrarian reform officer, said the program would benefit 3,955 ARBs in Sorsogon.

Reacting to criticisms that the GMA program is being used for President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign, Moral said they can take criticisms but "whenever we have the access to serve the less privileged, we will take it (sic)."

"I personally believe that basic health services should be availed (of) and granted to our less privileged (farmers). For me it's a noble program and the government should have long before looked into this. Health is a basic (human) right," Moral said.

He said the DAR is waiting for the PCSO to implement the project since it is providing the local government units with health services first. *Emir Emano Gamis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Comelec declares town poll hot spot

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Intense political rivalry and the reported proliferation of loose firearms in Buug, Zamboanga Sibugay prompted the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to declare the town as a hot spot in the coming elections.

But lawyer Helen Aguila Flores, Comelec director for Western Mindanao, said the declaration was still subject for deliberation.

The declaration came after an encounter between supporters of two candidates on March 16 that left a person killed and six others wounded.

Supt. Raul Gomez, Zamboanga Sibugay police chief, said at around 12:30 a.m. of March 16, armed men attacked the house of mayoralty candidate Junam Lagas in Barangay Datu Panas in Buug. Four of Lagas' sawmill workers were wounded in the attack.

Some 40 minutes later, another group of armed men opened fire at the house of Leopoldo Soner, a campaign leader of Lagas, in Barangay Compostela also in Buug.

Gomez said Soner's farm workers were also armed and retaliated, leaving Serio Tagalog dead and Loloy Tagalog wounded.

The Tagalogs, according to Gomez, are known followers of gubernatorial candidate Eugenio Famor.

Soner was also wounded in the attack.

"What happened had something to do with politics, that's why we recommended (the declaration of) the town (as) a hot spot," Gomez said. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Party-list group takes new tack in campaign

MATI, Davao Oriental—The party-list group Sanlakas, which the military earlier branded as a legal front of the communist movement, is singing a different tune.

Anaclito Macatabog, president of Sanlakas in Mindanao, told the INQUIRER that his group's campaign pitch would be "Sanlakas: Rejectionist of communist ideologies."

He said that such a campaign pitch would draw more votes for the group in the coming elections.

"We are not communists. We abhor communism. We are rejectionists (sic) of communist ideologies because it is obsolete. Communism has only brought havoc to the people of the world (sic)," Macatabog said.

Sanlakas, however, urged the New People's Army (NPA) to spare their group from the collection of permit-to-campaign fees.

"We will tell them (NPA) that we don't have money to pay for the permit-to-campaign fees. Our pork barrel went directly to our livelihood projects for the poor," Macatabog said. *Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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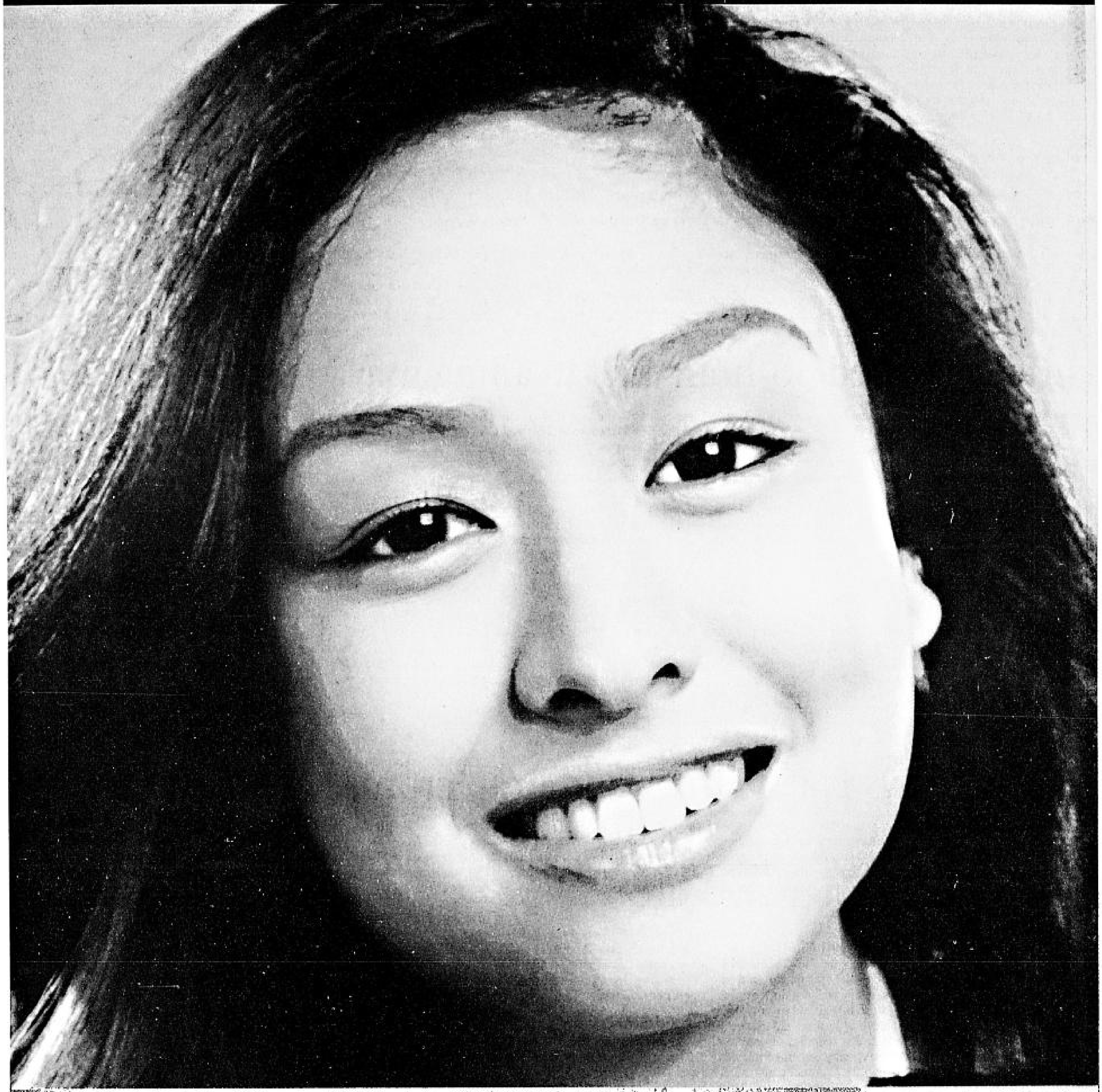

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Erap speaks at FPJ rally in Iligan City

From page A1

January 2001 and detained while on trial for plunder, many poor voters stuck with him.

Some of his supporters say Ms Macapagal, an economist who had been vice president until he was removed from office, is an interloper who the ruling elite used to stage a coup because they feared Estrada's "pull" among the masses.

Courting the poor

Analysts see the so-called "Estrada vote" divided between Poe and Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who is running fourth in opinion polls. Raul Roco, a former education secretary, is running third in the polls as an independent candidate and television evangelist Eduardo Villanueva is fifth.

The fight for votes is most acute in the bottom two bands of the A-to-E income bracket system, which make up at least 70 percent of the electorate.

"Estrada's support for Poe could give Ms Macapagal a boost from the A-B-C sectors but it could also help the actor gain more support from the D and E sectors," Llamas said.

Erap's speech longer than FPJ

Estrada's endorsement over the radio on Wednesday evening was a bit longer than Poe's speech to a crowd that had waited for hours to see him. Worried that Poe's typical brevity may turn off voters, his allies have asked him to speak longer.

"If possible, extend your speech a little bit because people have waited for six or seven hours," Vice President Teofisto Guingona, who defected to Poe's camp recently as an adviser on governance and public policy, had told the actor.

FPJ'S CAMPAIGN style: More hands, less talk. EDWIN BACASMAS

Most fiery attack

Poe is taking to heart Guingona's advice for him "not to be humble" when speaking in public.

At the rally in Iligan City, Poe repeatedly called the administration "rotten" and deserving of being brought down come election day. It was his most fiery attack yet against Ms Macapagal.

Iligan is considered the turf of Ms Macapagal, who spent her early childhood years in the city, but this did not stop Poe from denouncing the administration's failure to provide for the needs of the poor.

Almost shouting and with anger in his voice, he called the administration "rotten" four times. "*Dapat kalusin ang napakabulok na gobyerno na eto* (This rotten government should be removed)," he said amid the cheers of the crowd.

Poe told the crowd there was a need to change the present culture in government which, he said, was condoning corruption and influence-peddling.

Lullaby

"That's why I need your support to bring back confidence in the government," he said.

And as has been the practice in his campaign rallies, he stopped speaking to introduce his friend and fellow actor Eddie Garcia, who climbed the stage to endorse Poe.

This time, though, Garcia had a new "act." He sang *a capella* a few lines of the Visayan lullaby "Dandansuy."

After Garcia, Poe went back on stage to thank the people, ending his speech by declaring "I love you" to the crowd four times.

Before Poe's fiery speech, the crowd had been worked up by Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino senatorial candidates who hurled tirades against the government. KNP senatorial candidate Jamby Madrigal asked the crowd if this city was for President Macapagal and the crowd responded in the negative. *Reuters and Christine O. Avendaño*

Estrada allowed 36-hour visit to ailing ma

From page A1

of protest from private prosecutors and anti-graft groups. President Macapagal-Arroyo, however, justified it on humanitarian grounds. Last week, PlunderWatch filed a complaint against the President for allowing Estrada to leave his detention cell. The law does not allow house arrest for plunder which is a non-bailable offense.

Treat Erap with dignity

In a speech yesterday at the UP Public Lecture Series on the Philippines Presidency and Administration in Malacañang, Ms Macapagal said: "As a person, I feel it is only fair to treat former President Estrada with respect and dignity."

But she vowed to respect the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court's decision on her predecessor's request to be allowed to stay at his 15-hectare vacation estate provided it was placed under government control.

The government's top prosecutor in the graft and plunder case against Estrada said such an arrangement was "illegal."

Illegal

"They are asking the government to commit something wrong. That is an illegal arrangement," Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio told the INQUIRER in an interview.

"That is tantamount to a sequestration of a private property without basis," he said.

Legitimizing Estrada's illegal forays out of his detention cell was the reason behind the revival of his plea for "house arrest," PlunderWatch convenor Carol Araullo said.

The Sandiganbayan had twice rejected such a plea.

"They (Estrada's lawyers) are now trying to make his visits to his (Tanay) villa appear legal," Araullo said "Whether you call it a house arrest, a rest house arrest, a clubhouse arrest, there's no such thing in our laws."

She said all this talk about humanitarian treatment was just to cover up the special treatment given to Estrada by his police custodians with the go-signal of Malacañang.

Return to VMMC

Villa-Ignacio reiterated the proposal for Estrada to be returned to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City to bring him nearer to his mother in San Juan.

Estrada's lawyers have also asked the Sandiganbayan to allow him to undergo weekly therapy for his arthritic knees at the Cardinal Santos Hospital in San Juan and to visit his ailing mother once a week.

"It will just create discomfort and pain to their client," Villa-Ignacio said of the defense lawyers' request that Estrada remain at his rest house and make a five-hour trip to San Juan and back every week.

But should Estrada be returned to the VMMC, Villa-Ignacio said prosecutors would not object to weekly visits to his mother, a "Filipino tradition," which he said they could not deny Estrada.

"We have not objected to him being issued a pass for such purpose," he said.

PlunderWatch supported Villa-Ignacio's proposal that Estrada be returned to the VMMC.

No evidence for defense

The Sandiganbayan, meanwhile, issued a joint resolution throwing out Estrada's request to be allowed to forego the presentation of evidence in his defense.

The Sandiganbayan's special division directed Estrada on March 17 to start presenting evidence on April 19, his 67th birthday.

Justices Nazario, Edilberto Sandoval and Teresita Leonardo de Castro "denied for lack of merit" the defense lawyers' request that they be allowed to file a demurrer to evidence, a virtual waiver of his right to rebut the plunder charges.

"If he (Estrada) so desires, he may present evidence on April 19 and 21 at 9 a.m. and every Monday and Wednesday thereafter," the court said.

Estrada had repeatedly said that he was not presenting evidence because he did not recognize the authority of the special division created to try him.

Instead, he had opted to come up with a video compact disk declaring himself "Not Guilty" on all the charges against him. His allies are now distributing the VCDs to his supporters. *With a report from Gil Cabacungan Jr.*

GMA warns vs Poe, Marcos and Erap cronies and 'kitchenomics'

From page A1

In warning against voting for the return of Marcos and Estrada cronies, Ms Macapagal appeared to be indirectly attacking businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, the reputed "kingmaker" whose support as head of the Nationalist People's Coalition she had sought as a key factor to winning against Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr.

Searing attack

She might have also slighted some of his senatorial candidates as well as one of hers, staunch Estrada defender Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

The UP Public Lectures series is intended to be a forum for presidents to discuss their achievements and challenges. But Ms Macapagal, whom two KNP senatorial candidates had asked the Supreme Court to declare resigned or on leave, used it as a virtual campaign stage to mount a searing attack on Poe and the opposition made up of Marcos and Estrada allies.

"Our nation has a clear choice between tested and experienced leadership on one hand, and gambling on inexperience and uncertainty on the other," she said, adding:

No easy job

Harping on Poe's lack of experience, Ms Macapagal said the presidency was not an "easy job" because it required hard work to achieve a vision; experience to mind the details of national housekeeping; managerial skills to handle a bureaucracy of 1.2 million civil servants; diplomatic skills to represent and explain the country's interests in international forums; and the "highest quality of judgment" on issues needing executive attention daily.

She said the May 10 election would test the country's "political maturity" because it involved choosing between "staying the course of stability and growth against the seductions of populist demagoguery and the fleeting thrill of flirting with the untested and the unknown."

She also said being a president involved "much more than talk, much more than a beautiful slogan, much more than a simple recipe to get things done."

This is why, she said, voters should go for the familiar "cook" who could "offer more than leftovers or scraps of ideas from discredited politicians."

'Political harassment'

In a statement issued by Malacañang, the President dismissed the petition lodged Wednesday before the Supreme Court by KNP senatorial candidates Amina Rasul and Ma. Elisa "Boots" Anson-Roa as a ploy by the opposition to get her to step down.

"It is a sad note that the opposition has been heavily inclined toward political harassment, demolition jobs and internal strife, instead of focusing on its platform and the issues that go with it," she said.

Ms Macapagal said Filipinos had become weary of electioneering and mudslinging every election, and were demanding to know how, once in office, their candidates would lead them and improve their lives.

She added: "This is a travesty of democracy. The opposition must get its act together and get in shape."

Roa and Rasul had asked the Supreme Court to declare Ms Macapagal resigned or on leave, purportedly to stop her from using government resources in her election campaign.

Ignacio Bunye, spokesperson of the President, said on Wednesday that the petition was "pure harassment."

Yesterday, Ms Macapagal's campaign manager Gabriel Claudio said he expected the opposition to "try every trick in the book" to harass her.

'Queen's' power

He said the opposition wanted to shift the heat to the administration after the unity talks between Poe and Sen. Panfilo Lacson, the other opposition candidate, again fell through.

Reacting to the charge of harassment, Rasul said: "How can we harass the Queen?

"Harassment is about power. Only those with power can harass another person. How can two ordinary private citizens who, according to Mr. Bunye, are not even ranking in senatorial surveys, harass Queen Gloria when she has at her disposal the power and might of the entire government bureaucracy?"

Rasul acknowledged that her and Roa's move involved politics.

"Of course it is politicking. [An] election is a political exercise. We are just asking the Supreme Court to make politicking fair to all," she said in a transcript released by her staff.

She also said: "Right now, the Queen is enjoying a very unfair advantage and it is clearly against the most basic law of our country, the Constitution."

Rasul is a former member of the ruling Lakas-CMD. She joined the opposition when she was not drafted in the administration's K-4 senatorial ticket.

'Hara-kiri'

In K-4 candidate Santiago's opinion, the Roa-Rasul petition is "constitutional hara-kiri."

"In effect, the petition asked the Supreme Court to amend the constitutional provision on succession and to reject the hallowed principle of separation of powers," said Santiago, a lawyer and former judge. "This ill-conceived pleading is both appalling in its ignorance and pathetic in its desperation."

According to Santiago, a president can be removed from office only by impeachment, and the vice president can succeed to the presidency only if the president dies, is permanently disabled, removed from office, or resigns.

"The President is entitled to absolute immunity from civil liability for her official acts because of the special nature of [her] office and functions," she added. *With reports from Carlito Pablo and Jerry Esplanada*

Guingona to lead protest vs US-led war

From page A1

dent Saddam Hussein's "weapons of mass destruction."

No such weapons have been found. Saddam today is in US custody.

"We do not want what happened in Iraq to happen to us here," Guingona said at a news conference with the protest organizers.

He said he was glad that there was a clear timetable for the occupying forces to relinquish control of Iraq, and for political and economic power to be returned to the Iraqis.

"We all wish for the well-being of Iraq. Sadly but resolutely, we must look at how we can help the situation there," he added.

US interests

Bishop Gabriel Carol, a convenor of the Justice not War Coalition, said the United States could no longer justify the war because it had failed to prove that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction.

"It has become painfully obvious that the war was ... about advancing US economic and political interests in the Middle East," he said.

Carol said the United States could also turn against the Philippines if it finds "terrorist" activities here. "We may be the next Iraq," he said.

Bishop Deogracias Iniguez Jr., a convenor of the Pilgrims for Peace, said pro-US administrations like Ms Macapagal's should realize that "millions of people around the world" are against the war in Iraq.

"The US and its allies have no moral ground whatsoever to remain in Iraq. It was unjustifiable then; it is still unjustifiable now," he said.

Gabriela president Liza Maza said Ms Macapagal was exposing the country to an attack similar to the deadly train bombings in Madrid last week.

She said Ms Macapagal could suffer the fate of the outgoing Spanish prime minister, Jose Maria Aznar, a staunch US supporter, who unexpectedly lost in the elections.

"One way to vote for peace is not to vote for Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo," Maza said.

'Committed'

Central Baghdad was again rocked yesterday by explosions that destroyed the Mt. Lebanon Hotel and nearby residential and commercial buildings. At least 27 people were killed and 40 others were injured. *(See story in The World, Page A12.)*

Acting Foreign Secretary Sonia Brady said the Philippine government condemned the latest bombings and other attacks "committed against the peace-loving people of Iraq, who are now just a few steps away to achieving democracy."

Brady said the Philippine Embassy in Baghdad had reported no Filipino casualty.

She said that despite the attacks in Iraq, the Philippines remained committed to providing humanitarian assistance through the 96-member Filipino contingent posted there.

At the Philippine Army Senior Leaders conference in Fort Bonifacio, University of the Philippines professor Carolina Hernandez said she favored a "temporary military arrangement" between the Philippines and its allies in the war against terrorism.

Hernandez, a military expert, said all countries were "at risk" of terrorist attacks since 9/11.

"It would be ridiculous not to cooperate with those that are similarly threatened, particularly if the country does not have its own domestic unity to handle this," she said. "In facing transnational issues, no country can do it alone. It will take a joint effort with those who share the interest and the predicament coming from these threats."

'Spear-bearer'

In Ormoc City, Alyansa ng Pag-asa standard-bearer Raul Roco said the Philippines should stop being the "spear-bearer" of the United States in the global fight against terrorism lest it lay itself open to terror attacks.

Roco questioned the Philippine foreign policy vis a vis the United States, saying the two countries had different interests.

"No two nations have the same national interest," he told reporters. "National interest is defined by people, resources, geography, isn't it? The policy of [Ms Macapagal] is that we have exactly the same national interest. How can that be?"

Roco said the Philippines could not be the United States' "instrument."

"We cannot be the spear-bearer of the Americans in the fight against terrorism in this part of the world," he said. "If you're a spear-bearer, a pawn, an instrument, you're free territory for the [terror network] al-Qaida. Why should the Philippines absorb all the enemies of any other countries? We have enough problems."

Roco said the Philippines should root out terrorism for its own interest, and not for US interest.

"Terrorism we must fight, but pursuant to the national interest," he said.

Coming home

Even Sen. Manuel Villar urged the President to reconsider her decision to retain a Philippine contingent in Iraq.

Villar, chair of the Senate committee on foreign relations, said the country had survived Ms Macapagal's decision to join the "Coalition of the Willing."

"But we don't need to continue to be at the center stage of this war," he told reporters in La Trinidad, Benguet. "[Not pulling out the contingent in Iraq] is a big mistake because the bombings there will never cease."

Villar said the members of the Filipino contingent wanted to come home.

"I was approached by their wives and husbands, and was asked to facilitate the release of a budget to take them home. The bombings will continue in Iraq because the Iraqis do not want us there," he said, adding:

"[The Iraqis] do not want the Americans there. In fact, the Americans also want to go home. They just do not know how to go about it without losing face."

Vulnerability

Villar reminded Ms Macapagal that Aznar lost in the Spanish elections because of the March 11 train bombings in Madrid.

He said Ms Macapagal's vulnerability lay on her insistence at thrusting the country into the limelight of a war that was inherently American.

"I respect [her authority] to decide our foreign policy," he said. "She wants us to be classified as a major US ally. But the war is over, so what's the point of staying in the center stage of this American war?"

Villar said he and Guingona relayed these views to the President during the recent meetings of the National Security Council.

"But we remain a minority voice in this government," Villar said. *Reports from Jerome Aning, Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Alcuin Papa in Manila; TJ Burgonio in Ormoc City; Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

77 bodies found …

From page A1

He said retrieval operations in the half-submerged ship, which the Coast Guard earlier thought could be finished today, could not be completed because debris had clogged the lavatory on one of the ship's decks.

Since the Coast Guard had practically completed the search of the ferry, it would recommend to the government that the retrieval operations be called off, Tamayo said.

"There were 40 bodies and 37 body parts recovered," he told reporters. "They are just parts which will be subjected to DNA testing by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI)."

Assuming the body parts belonged to 37 individuals, "the total could be 77," said Tamayo, who supervises the recovery operations aboard the 10,000-ton ship lying off Mariveles, Bataan.

The figures released by Tamayo differed from those of the Coast Guard's information office which said 44 bodies and 32 body parts had been recovered so far.

Tamayo said a special NBI forensics team conducting the DNA testing was also trying to match dental records of the missing.

Tamayo said retrieval operations on the deck where the tourist section was located had been hampered not only by debris stacked up in the lavatory but by the smallness of the opening leading to it.

2 Muslims

One of the witnesses at a hearing being conducted by the Special Board of Marine Inquiry raised eyebrows yesterday when she testified that she had encountered two Muslims aboard the ferry before the ship left Manila on its ill-fated voyage on Feb. 27.

Elaine Rafael, guest service officer of SuperFerry 14, said the two Muslims wore tunics and one of them sported a turban.

"He looked like Osama bin Laden," Rafael said, referring to the head of the al-Qaida terror network.

Some members of the board looked amused when Rafael made the statement.

Asked if she knew who Bin Laden was, Rafael said: "He is a Muslim."

But she could not place the nationality of the man wanted by the United States for allegedly masterminding the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington and believed by US intelligence agencies to be holed up in the mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Also smelled gunpowder

Rafael echoed the earlier testimony of the ship's captain and steward Alvin Reyes when she said she smelled gunpowder after an explosion rocked the ship.

The Abu Sayyaf terror group had claimed responsibility for the fire, saying one of its men had planted a bomb on board.

Investigators said they had found no evidence to back the Abu Sayyaf claim.

Rafael said she was in the business manager's office in the tourist area of the ship when she heard the explosion.

But she contradicted an earlier statement of Reyes, who had testified that he did not hear the general alarm sound and did not see the sprinkler system working after the explosion occurred.

Heard alarm

Rafael said she heard the alarm go off right after she left the business management office. She also said the sprinkler system worked but she did not have time to feel its rain-like effect because she rushed out to help the passengers reach safety.

With reports from AFP

THE SUPERFERRY 14 probe continues with Elaine Rafael, a member of the crew, testifying about the events of that tragic day. The Coast Guard is set to recommend stopping retrieval operations.

RANDY HORMILLOSA

No more blind dates, thanks to Bluetooth tech

From page A1

mobile phone, New Scientist reports.

Using Bluetooth wireless technology—a short-range system built into many mobile phones—would-be daters subscribe to a service that stores a personal profile, their photograph and a wish list of what they are looking for in a partner.

When the database spots enough similarities between two people who are in close proximity—say in a shopping mall, office, bar or cafe—the service tells their mobile phones to communicate with each other, sending over a package of details and a picture.

After the help of technology, comes the human bit—deciding whether and how to talk to a complete stranger.

The idea, called Serendipity, is the brainchild of four scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab, according to the report in next Saturday's issue of the British weekly.

Their hope is to take some of the roughness out of blind dating.

Online dating rooms are spreading fast on the Internet, where subscribers e-mail each other and, if things click, arrange to meet somewhere—a first encounter that can be difficult or even catastrophic.

With Bluetooth technology, potential love matches will "connect" when they are within 10 meters of each other.

Participants can adjust the settings in line with their mood and willingness to meet strangers.

For instance, they may want their profiles to be sent only to friends of friends, and can alter their availability according to their mood or whether they are in a situation for socializing.

AFP

tp "the practice"

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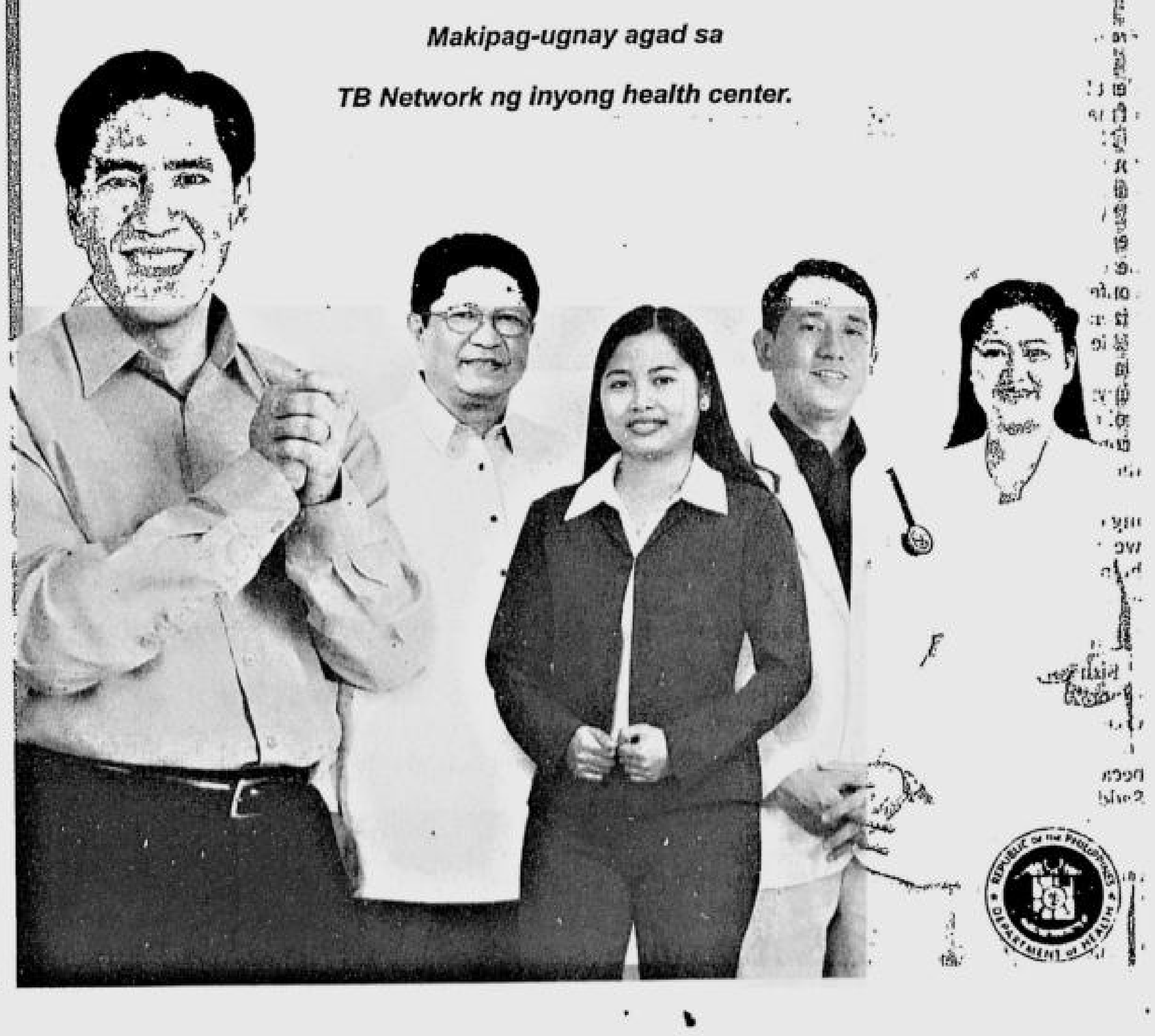

SUERTRES 8 4 1

SIX DIGIT (In exact order)
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SUPERLOTTO 6/49
10 21 25 35 36 46

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Tanong ng Bayan
InqTV
Ngayong Alas-10 Ng Gabi

Rest house arrest: Sino ang dapat managot?

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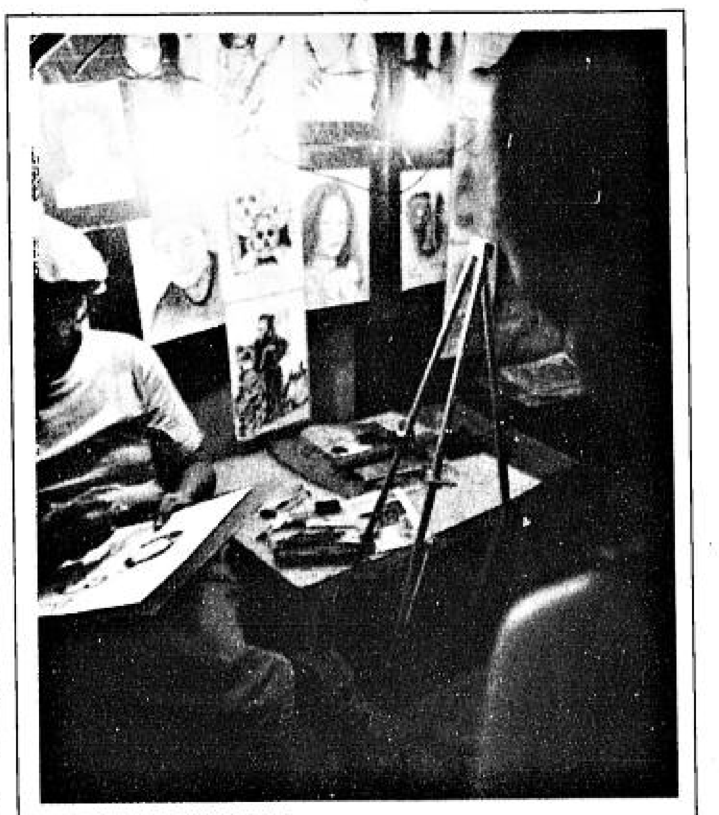
ABC



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By Abigail L. Ho

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Manila's newest linear park has broadened the sidewalk at the south bank of the river. *Tarra Quismundo*

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He also said the heavy traffic brought about by the additional volume of bus units have raised their operational costs.

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Saturday, December 13, 2003

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METRO

Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

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2 0 2 9 4 5

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
10 21 25 35 36 46

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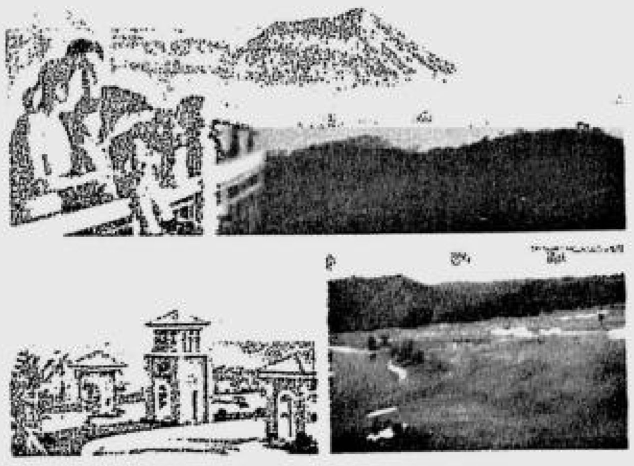

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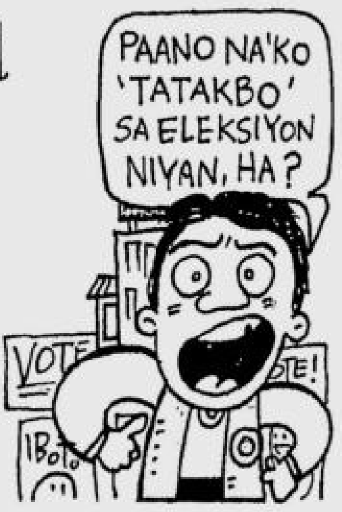
Unfinished leg lands trader in trouble

By Tina Santos


PAANO NA'KO 'TATAKBO' SA ELEKSIYON NIYAN, HA?
VOTE
VOTE!
IBOTO

THIS leg is going to cost her plenty.

After she failed to deliver an order for a prosthetic leg, businesswoman Connie Reyes is now in big trouble.

Amado Pascual, a mayoral candidate in Norzagaray, Bulacan, has filed estafa charges before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office against Reyes after he had made a P20,000 down payment for the leg he has yet to see—and use.

Reyes, owner of Banawe Ortho Medical Training Corporation, had told Pascual that he could pick up his order in a week. Repeated attempts to claim the leg later proved to be futile.

Pascual alleged that Reyes even refused to see him each time he came to collect.

The INQUIRER was unable to reach Reyes for her side of the story.

QC fire leaves 100 families homeless

A FIREMAN was hurt, while at least 100 families were rendered homeless when a fire razed at least 50 houses and a market in a squatters area in Novaliches, Quezon City, yesterday morning.

FO3 Rogelio del Rosario of the Quezon City fire department suffered second degree burns in the chest and was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

The fire started at 9:45 a.m. at the house of a certain Salvador Dimas.

Tina Santos

Water to cost more by April 1

WATER will cost more for customers of Manila Water Company Inc. when the company starts charging them an additional 19 centavos per cubic meter starting April 1.

Manila Water attributed the increase to the recent depreciation of the peso against the US dollar. This means an additional increase of P6.30 to P426.30 for a household using an average of 30 cubic meters per month.

The rate hike will jack up the company's current average rate of P10.40 per cubic meter to P10.81 per cubic meter.

Manila Water supplies water and sewerage services to the so-called "east zone:" parts of Manila, Quezon City, Makati, Mandaluyong, Marikina, Pasig, Taguig, Pateros and Rizal province.

The Ayala Group subsidiary said the tariff increase falls under the foreign currency differential adjustment (FCDA) approved by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and the Regulatory Office.

The FCDA allows both the company and the other water concessionaire, Maynilad, to recover losses from the peso's fall against the US dollar as it pays off dollar-denominated concession fees to the MWSS and other loans it acquired.

FCDA is computed quarterly based on the depreciation of the peso to the dollar.

The water firm already adjusted its FCDA by another •16 centavos and the basic tariff by 34 centavos because of inflation in January.

Christine Gaylican

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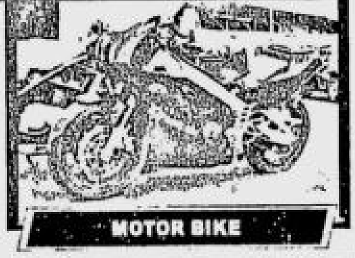
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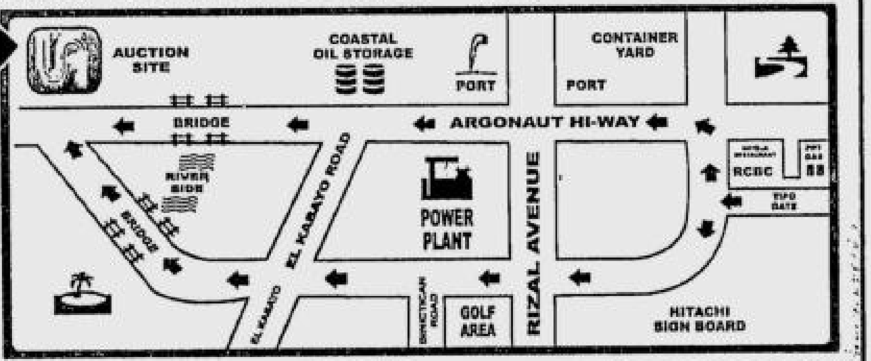

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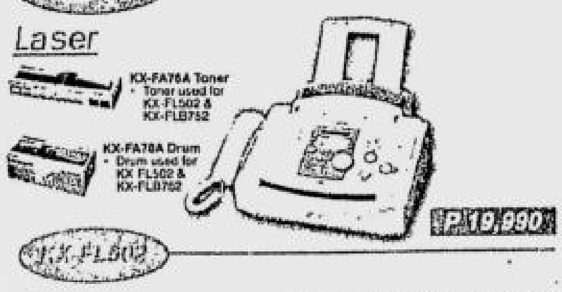
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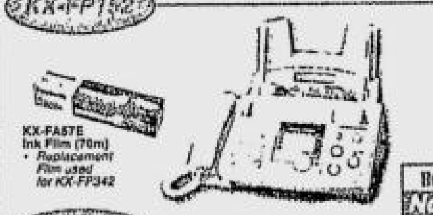
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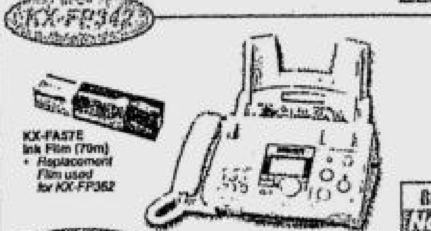
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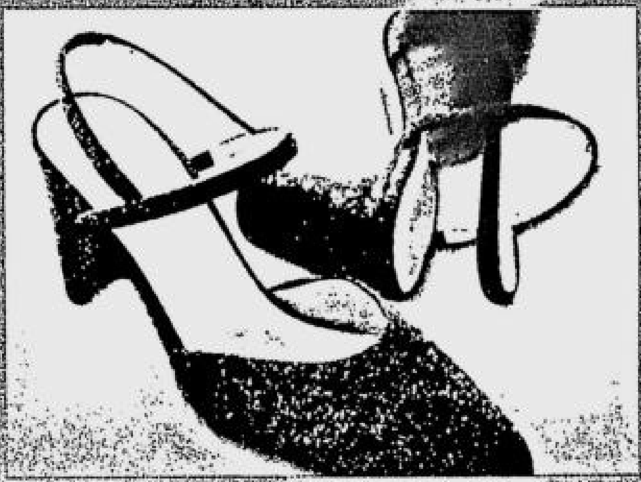

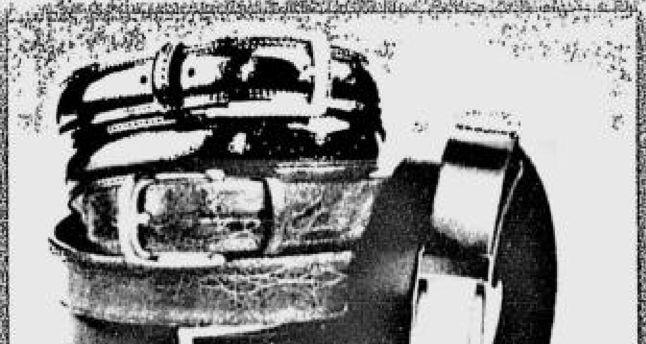

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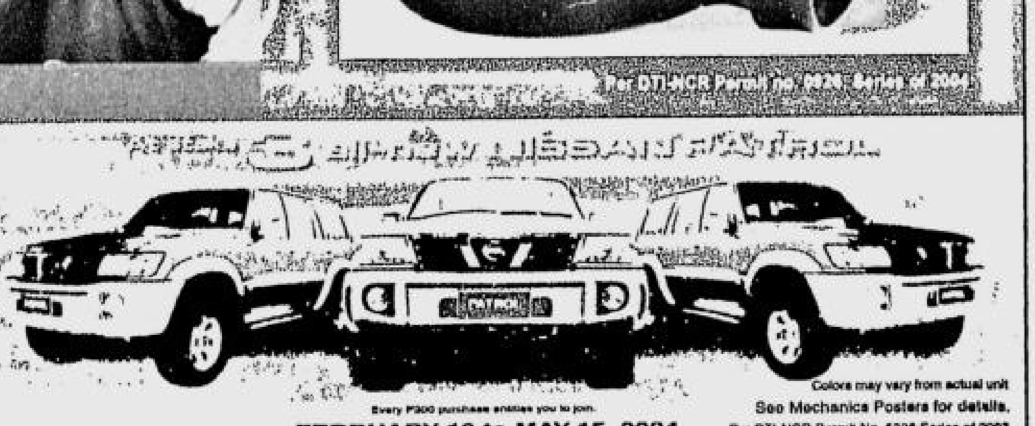

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'Restless' NSAs want to go it alone

17 sports heads taking active role in SEA Games preparations

By Marc Anthony Reyes

A NEW group of concerned national sports association officials has banded together to form a consultative assembly "that will ensure the success of the Southeast Asian Games next year."

The group is scheduled to meet next week, ahead of the POC general assembly on March 31, where most of the 36 regular POC members are expected to attend.

So far, 17 NSA presidents and representatives have agreed to join the assembly which will "be vigilant" and one that will "take an active role in the SEA Games affair."

Judo president Reynaldo Jaylo, the spokesperson of the group, said the consultative assembly is made up of "restless" NSAs whose sports are calendared in the SEA Games.

"We are restless, especially those whose sports will be played in 2005," said Jaylo. "We need to know our roles and how to get our athletes ready because this is a national undertaking."

Jaylo said the group won't wait for POC instructions anymore and go ahead with their own preparations with direct help from the Philippine Sports Commission.

The call for a unified body came from pencak silat's Sultan Jamalul Kiram III, who was recently named presidential adviser on Muslim Royalties Concerns.

Kiram said the NSAs are tired of the "little wars" inside the POC and the ongoing bickering between the POC and the PSC.

"It's about time we work on our own (SEAG preparation) and show the government that we deserve the help we are getting from them," said Jaylo.

"We are not consulted by the POC leaders, even by the Philsoc (Games organizing body). We don't communicate. When do we make a move, when it's too late?" Kiram said.

Among the NSAs willing to take part in the consultative body are athletics, softball, judo, basketball, archery, chess, football, karatedo, triathlon, tennis, pencak silat, sepak takraw, billiards and snookers, soft tennis, wushu, taekwondo, canoeing and weightlifting.

Pacquiao confident of licking Marquez

By Tarra Quismundo

I WOULD give my all, even if it means giving my life, to win the fight.

Manny Pacquiao promised this yesterday on the eve of his departure for the US to start serious training for his title bid against WBA-IBF featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico on May 8 at the MGM Grand Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada.

"All my fights I give back to the Lord, my family and my country," added Pacquiao during a courtesy call on Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr. accompanied by business manager Rod Nazario and his American promoter, Murad Muhammad.

The conqueror of Mexican featherweight great Marco Antonio Barrera last November will leave on a PAL flight at 10 tonight for Los Angeles where he will immediately hook up with trainer Freddie Roach at the American's Wild Card gym to regain his old fighting form.

Despite his long layoff, Muhammad predicts a victory for Pacquiao, who gave up his IBF superbantam crown last January to concentrate on megabuck fights in the 126-lb division.

"He's gonna win. He trains even at night and he doesn't get tired. He is a sensational athlete, and he is ready mentally, spiritually," said Muhammad.

He even likened Pacquiao to his namesake, former heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali, whom he saw in the famous

PACQUIAO/ A26

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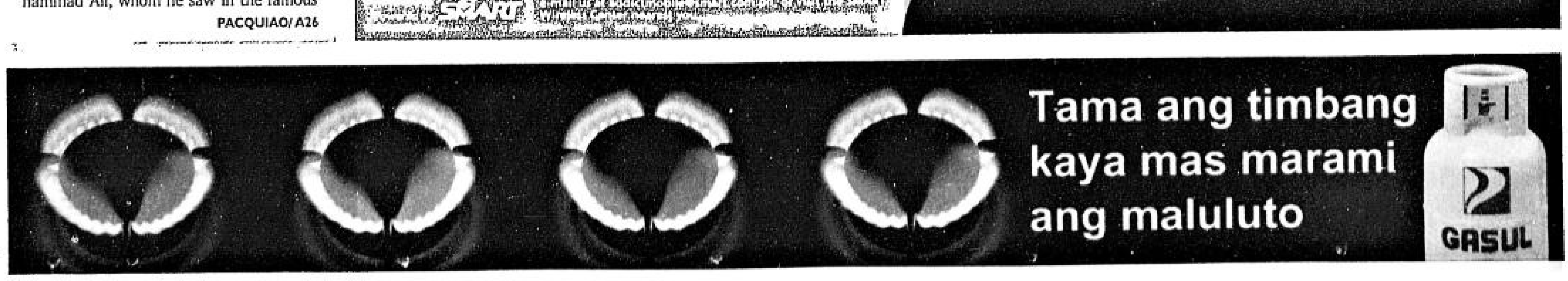
Tama ang timbang
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Ex-Eagles tangle as PBA foes tomorrow

FOR most of their amateur careers, Rich Alvarez and Wesley Gonzales were like a pair of gringos looking out for each other's backs during their days at Ateneo.

When Alvarez suited up for his first game in the Philippine Basketball Association Fiesta Conference, Gonzales was out there watching, bleeding as his friend suffered the ignominy of being the first No. 1 draft pick to be benched in his first outing.

Tomorrow, the two rookies will end up guarding each other as opponents when the Shell Turbo Chargers face the FedEx Express.

"I'm excited because I might have to guard this guy (Gonzales) full time or most of the time," said Alvarez.

Alvarez, the former UAAP Most Valuable Player, was picked No. 1 overall by Shell during the rookie draft.

Gonzales, a do-it-all player teeming with skills, was selected ninth overall and the third first-rounder by FedEx.

Until then, fate had linked them almost forever. The two had conspired to give Ateneo a title in two championship appearances in the UAAP. In the Philippine Basketball League, they fed off each other.

One, a workhorse who plays with bruising intensity; the other, a cocky gunner with an endless supply of confidence.

That partnership is over and done with.

"The game is something to look forward to because I would be playing against a guy I'm used to drawing strength from during our Ateneo days," said Gonzales.

In the second game at the Yñares Center, Red Bull plays Ginebra in a battle that could spill out of the hardcourt. Last year, fans of both squads came to blows.

The game marks the coaching debut of Siot Tanquincen for Ginebra, whose old mentor, Allan Caidic, now sits in the bench as team manager.

'Kiko' may just stay for good

By June Navarro

IF OPPORTUNITIES come his way, Francis Arnaiz might just stay for good.

"I'm open to all options. In fact, one of the reasons I'm here is to look at what I can do," said Arnaiz, who showed up at the PBA games for the first time Wednesday after living in the United States in the last 18 years.

The 53-year-old Arnaiz, whose once flowing hair has turned into salt and pepper, is in town since last week, helping his former Toyota teammate, reelectionist Sen. Robert Jaworksi, on the campaign trail.

Arnaiz said he would return to his family at Elk Grove, some 22 km from Sacramento, California, after the last ballot had been counted.

"When you get older, you look at a job as just a job. It's different when you're among your people. You know you really belong," said Arnaiz, who works for California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenneger at the state's Teachers Credentials Department.

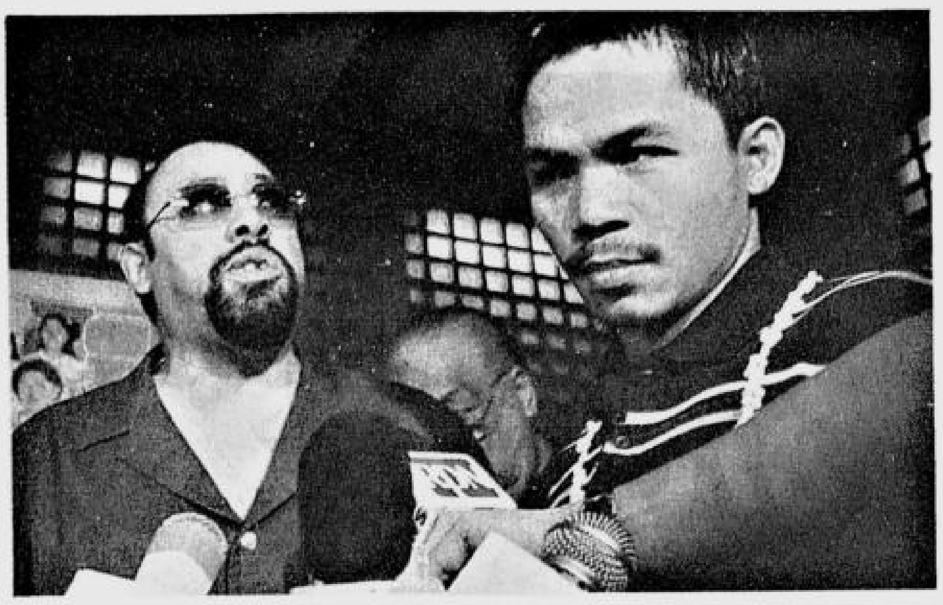
One of the most celebrated players during the '70s and '80s, Arnaiz hung up his sneakers in 1986 while playing for Ginebra and moved to California, where he lived without touching a basketball.

"Fans are now different from the fans before," said Arnaiz while watching the game between Sta. Lucia Realty and Talk 'N Text.

"It's what they love. If you put an ordinary fan today back into our time, he would probably wonder, 'Is this a basketball game?' " he added.

Arnaiz, who has three kids, the oldest of whom is 23-year-old Francis Jr., could have shown his old skills last year when the PBA staged the Toyota-Crispa reunion game.

"I certainly wanted to be here but there were more important things to do at that time. Anyway, I think that's the way it should end. Toyota winning over Crispa," said Arnaiz.



SERIOUSLY NOW: Muhammad (left) says Pacquiao will be champ for a long time. JM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Pacquiao confident . . .

From page A25

"Thrilla in Manila" fight in 1975 when he stopped Joe Frazier in the 13th round.

"He has the spirit of Muhammad," he added.

Confident that Pacquiao would give Manila a fight to be happy about, Muhammad said that the 25-year-old southpaw from Gen. Santos City would prevail over Marquez, even if the Mexican had been fighting in the US long before the Filipino's first American bout.

"Manny likes to take on pressure, and he'll be here for a long time. All of Manila believes in him," said Muhammad.

Pacquiao also exuded confidence he'll get past Marquez.

"I don't want to give any final statements (about the outcome of the fight). I'll give him only punches that would hurt him," said Pacquiao.

If he beats Marquez, Pacquiao would fight another Mexican, WBC super featherweight champion Erik Morales, on July 31.

"Our goal is for Manny to knock out the three, so that he would be known around the world as the Asian who toppled the three Mexicans," said Nazario.

Murad arrived several days ago to accompany an HBO crew which shot footages of Pacquiao, and to discuss the possibility of holding a "Thrilla in Manila 2" showcasing Pacquiao as the main attraction.

After the courtesy call, Pacquiao hit the mitts in a workout with personal trainer Buboy Fernandez at the Wild Card Gym in Manila. The Filipino ring hero is scheduled to go through another grueling session today before his departure.

Pacquiao (38-2-1, 30 KOs) is guaranteed $1 million in challenging the orthodox-fighting Marquez (42-2, 33 KOs). *With a report from Salven L. Lagumbay*

Pioneer badminton qualifying round set

THE PIONEER Badminton summer tournament will hold its final leveling schedule this weekend at the Pioneer Badminton courts in Mandaluyong City.

The event, which serves as a qualifying round to determine the category of each player when the tournament fires off on April 3-4, comes off the wraps at 1 p.m. tomorrow and ends on Sunday. Tournament play on both days ends at 4 p.m.

Pioneer Badminton's Edmin Tarriela said the event will be followed by the Epson Summer Camp slated April 12-May 3 (first batch) and May 10-May 31 (second batch).

Tournament sponsors include Epson, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, 89.9 dwTM, Regatta, Whistlestop, Sunrise Hotel, Discovery Spa and Yehey.com.

Pioneer Badminton had its initial screening of over 100 players last week .

"We have limited the number of participants in the tournament to 240 from 260 to keep competition at a high level," said Tarriela, who also organized three high-caliber tournaments last year.

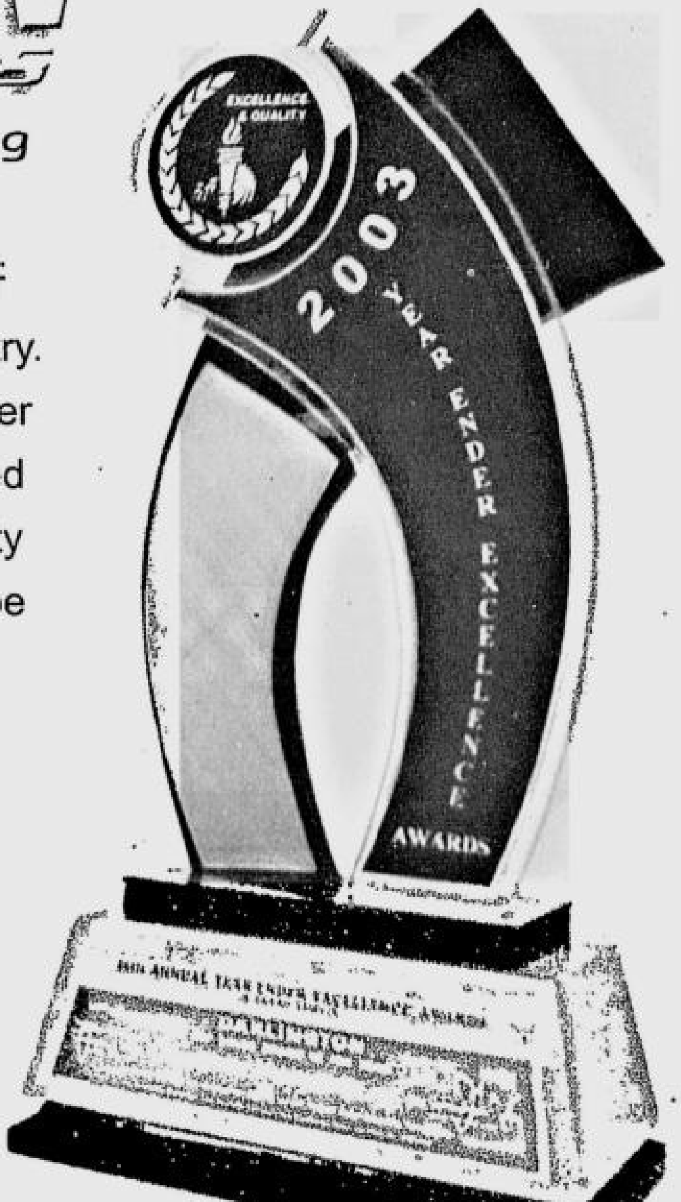
Interested parties may call 746-0828 or 638-5343 for details. Deadline of registration for the tournament is on March 12. Meanwhile participants for the Epson Summer Camp should enroll before April 12. Epson summer camp shirts will be given free to the first 100 registrants.

Camp director Eg Lim will facilitate the Epson camp along with former national teammates Malvin Alcala and Steven Yan.

With 10 sessions per batch, Lim and the other coaches try to zero in on the players' physical conditioning and motor skills.

Water polo 3-on-3 slated

THE PHILIPPINE Amateur Swimming Association water polo committee will launch the "3-on-3/5-on-5 age group series 1" on April 3-4 at the Rizal Memorial pool with more than 150 players from various clubs, schools and the military vying for honors. The tourney will serve as an evaluation and tryout for the national senior and junior teams, according to water polo official Ed San Pedro. For inquiries, call 4040864 (water polo office) or text San Pedro at 0916-5561011



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Murakami, 2 others ahead

UNLIKELY leader Murakami upstages the pros with a solid all-around game. PDI PHOTO

By Musong Castillo, *Contributor*

CANLUBANG, Laguna—Amateur Artemio Murakami joined a three-way tie of unlikely leaders with an even par 70 yesterday at the start of the second The Country Club Invitational golf championship here.

Rookie pro Cookie La'O dropped three strokes on two of the last four holes and journeyman Ramil Bisera bogeyed the 18th from the trap to complete the cast of surprise front-runners in the P3.85-million event. Another amateur, Romy Jaraula of Del Monte, headed a five-man group with 71s even as defending champion Cassius Casas found himself staring at the 36-hole cutoff knife after opening with a 78.

Casas stumbled with a fat nine on the par 5 second hole and finished double bogey-bogey to end up in a four-way tie for 33rd in the 44-player field gunning for the P1.1-million top prize.

Only the top 21 scores and ties will advance to the weekend play after today's second round.

Keeping pace with Jaraula, who sparked Del Monte's record win in the recent Philippine Airlines Interclub, were Antonio Lascuña and Benjie Magada, who tied for second last year, Jerome Delariarte and the veteran Rey Alit.

Richard Sinfuego and Demetrio Sanchez turned in 72s for joint ninth, with Danny Zarate, Rogelio Cabajar, Elmer Salvador and Eddie Bagtas another stroke back.

Murakami, bravely coping with the still unsolved death of his Japanese father two years ago, built his 34-36 round on back-to-back birdies on the eighth and ninth holes.

A former jungolf pride, La'O was three under when he hit a palm tree with his approach on the 15th and took a double bogey. Shaken, he bogeyed the next hole after missing the green.

"That's golf. Things like that happen," said La'O, who will try to complete his first full season as a professional after spending most of his rookie season last year battling hepatitis. "I will just leave it (bad break) behind."

La'O had a total of five birdies, three bogeys and that double.

Lito Rempojo, the winner of the pro-am

MURAKAMI/ A29

RP to host Asian fencing, Olympic q'fying

By Trina Ibarle

LET your sword do the talking.

This was the challenge thrown at the country's top fencers when they see action in the 2004 Asia-Oceania Olympic Qualifying Championships and the Sharp Asian Fencing Championships next month at the Philsports Arena in Pasig.

At least 400 athletes from 20 countries are expected to vie for honors in the epee, sabre and foil events of the Asian tourney set on April 21-26 after the Olympic qualifier slated April 19-20.

Among the countries fielding entries to the Olympic qualifier and Asian event are Australia, Chinese-Taipei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Thailand, Uzbekistan, New Zealand and the host country.

China, India, Iran and Korea have also signified their participation.

Bannering the local contingent are Southeast Asian Games medalists Wally Mendoza, Veena Tessa Nuestro, Joanna Franquelli, Emerson Segui, Rolando Canlas Jr., brothers Ramil and Ruperto Endriano, Wilfredo Viscayno Jr., Avelino Victorino Jr., Jocelyn Naval, and Edmon Velez.

Only one entry per country will seek two Olympic berths in women's foil and sabre while one each will make it in women's epee and men's epee, foil and sabre. Team and individual epee, sabre, foil competitions for men and women will comprise the Asian fencing program.

Philippine Olympic Committee president and Philippine Amateur Fencers Association (Pafa) president Celso Dayrit expressed confidence that the national fencers would clinch Olympic berths.

"It's going to be a very tough competition, but we are confident that the fencers will give their best. We have a good chance of getting at least one or two slots," said Dayrit during a press conference at the National Sports Grill yesterday.

The last time a Filipino made it to the Olympics was when Wawit Torres qualified in 1992. Torres is now a member of the RP coaching staff.

Also expressing optimism was International Olympic Committee representative to the Philippines Francisco Elizalde. "Fencing is a sport where the Filipino can excel, given international exposure," he said.

The Philippines has won all the overall titles in the SEA championship since 1992 and emerged the region's best in the past six SEAG. Last year, the Philippines bagged four gold, three silver and one bronze medals in the Vietnam Games.

Scheduled to arrive for the tourney are Federacion Internationale d'Escrime president Rene Roch and Asian Fencing Confederation head Chang Young Soo.

In Arnaiz, Jawo has a true friend

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Al S. Mendoza

WHAT is friendship?

It comes in many forms, is defined in many ways.

But friendship's best form, best definition, is still this: You don't harbor an ill feeling of any kind to someone you consider your friend.

One you consider your friend may not consider you though as his friend. Never mind. Friendship is never stopping to be a friend to a fellow you have always considered to be your friend from way back.

Neither time nor distance is a hindrance to maintaining a friendship.

Like love, friendship must be forever if it is to be called friendship. Everlasting.

I may not have seen my brother for years because he now lives in Toronto, Canada, but that does not mean I have lost my love for him.

I may not have seen my friend, Sonny Ungson, for years because he now lives in San Francisco, California, but that does not mean I have lost him as a friend.

You may lose your love, but never a friend.

There is friendship when two persons treat each other without any thought of gaining anything in return. Their only shred of relationship is their existence. In fact, even when death intervenes, true friendship can't be crushed. It can extend down to the relatives of a departed friend. It can stand through flowers brought to his tomb every now and then.

There is a whale of a difference between knowing someone for 20 years and still not considering him a friend and counting someone as your friend after having known him for only a week.

For two to become friends, they don't need to treat each other nice. One can badmouth the other but between friends, badmouthing is defined as sweet talk.

Friendship has but one rule: Your friend can't hurt you at all.

The prime example of true friendship in sports that I have yet to see duplicated is the one between Robert Jaworski and Francis Arnaiz.

When Arnaiz left the country in 1986 to stay in the United States for good, all kinds of nasty talks filled the air. One bordered on the silliest thought ever: that Arnaiz had allegedly left because he had quarreled with Jaworski.

I never believed that, of course. I've seen their friendship blossom starting in the glory days when they were teammates at Toyota in the glorious years of the PBA, when basketball then was basically known as the Crispa-Toyota era. It was a friendship so pure no one, not even their sons or daughters or even their wives, can ever kill.

Before Arnaiz left for the States, I saw him at the Mandarin Hotel in Makati City. I had just written a column then about his immortal line saying that PBA players have become "*por kilo*." It was that time when team owners have suddenly dumped players in wild abandon in favor of new ones. Arnaiz had been very vocal in his criticism of PBA players being treated as mere commodities by team owners. To Arnaiz (Kiko to his friends), loyalty is non-negotiable. Not for sale.

I had bought his line, but I never knew if he liked my piece on that or not. We never talked about it. Our meeting was very casual. I was having coffee and, suddenly, he materialized. He didn't even tell me he was leaving the country for good. We shook hands and that was it. Before I knew it, he was gone.

Arnaiz is one guy that's hard to please. He has always been his own man.

But then, talk about Jaworski and Arnaiz will put his life on the line for the man generally regarded as Mr. Forever in basketball. In their heyday, they were Toyota's 1-2 punch—if not the best, most lethal, backcourt duo Philippine basketball has ever known. To Arnaiz, Jaworski will always be worth—to paraphrase Ninoy's words—fighting for.

That is why when I read in the papers yesterday that Arnaiz is in town, I knew something's cooking between the two. True enough, the papers said Arnaiz is here to personally campaign for his bosom friend to win another term as senator of the republic come the May 10 polls.

It's been 18 years since he left town. Now he's back. And Jaworski did not even have to tell him to come home.

How can you not love Francis Arnaiz for that?

***

FASTBREAK. Join the Philippine Basketball Camp (PBC) tomorrow (Saturday) and on March 21 in Lucena City and get the chance to expand your basketball knowledge the scientific way from living legends Bogs Adornado, Dave Regullano and Freddie Hubalde. Multi-titled coaches Leo Austria and Louie Alas will be on hand to join their fellow mentors Juan Castro, Lito Legaspi, Ronald Perada, Bernard Ramos, Jayson Santos, Caloy Sillona, Noel Caparros and Peter Sta. Maria in the camp sponsored by Red Finn, Ger II and adidas. Camp director Dayong J. Mendoza, whose mother hails in Calauag, Quezon, has the full backing of Quezon Gov. Willie Enverga. Enverga calls the weekend bash a "breakthrough forum to upgrade the skills and knowledge of our beloved basketball-loving people in Quezon." Call 0919-3188511 or Angie at (042) 3735385 to fill in the remaining few slots available. The PBC goes to Mindanao from Lucena. Call Pol Torrijos (083) 5525578 or 0919-3981807, Jeanneth (083) 3018992 or Jun Allera 0918-4468710 for other details.

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Among the sports suggested during the recent Asean Para Sports Federation (APSF) working committee meeting at the Westin Philippine Plaza were athletics, aquatics, table tennis, badminton, powerlifting, wheelchair basketball, goalball and chess.

According to PSC commissioner Michael Barredo, who is also chair of the APSF board of governors, priority will be given to athletics, aquatics, table tennis, badminton and powerlifting "because these were played in the 2nd Asean Para Games in Hanoi last year."

Other sports being considered are tenpin bowling, wheelchair tennis, judo, soccer for intellectually disabled and football for the blind.

Aside from commissioner Barredo, those who attended the APSF meeting were Francisco Lahoz and Edna Carpio of the Philippines, APSF president Zaina Abu Zarin and Adha Krishnan of Malaysia, Vu The Piet, Le Hong Dipr Chi and Nguyen Van Quan of Vietnam, Luis de Arellano, Lydia Buendia and Deanna Gregorio of Philspada, and Emmanuel Penson, APSF vice president for marketing and communications.

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ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	BALAT SIBUYAS / AMBISYOSA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

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STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MILAN
CINEMA-2	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
CINEMA-3	DRAGON VS. NINJA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	CARMEN
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	KUYA
CINEMA-6	U-BELT
CINEMA-7	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-8	ANNIE B
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	TORQUE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HIDALGO
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
CINEMA-12	LOVE ACTUALLY
CINEMA-14	GOTHIKA
CINEMA-15	GRUDGE 2

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PIÑAS)	RUNAWAY JURY
CINEMA-1	ANNIE B
CINEMA-2	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-4	TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

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1	THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT	12:30, 3:05, 5:40 8:15, 10:50	R-13
2	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	11:00, 1:10, 3:20 5:30, 7:40, 9:50	GP
3	50 FIRST DATES	11:35, 1:50, 4:05 6:20, 8:35, 10:50	R-18
4	OTSO-OTSO	12:20, 2:40, 5:00 7:20, 9:40	PG 13

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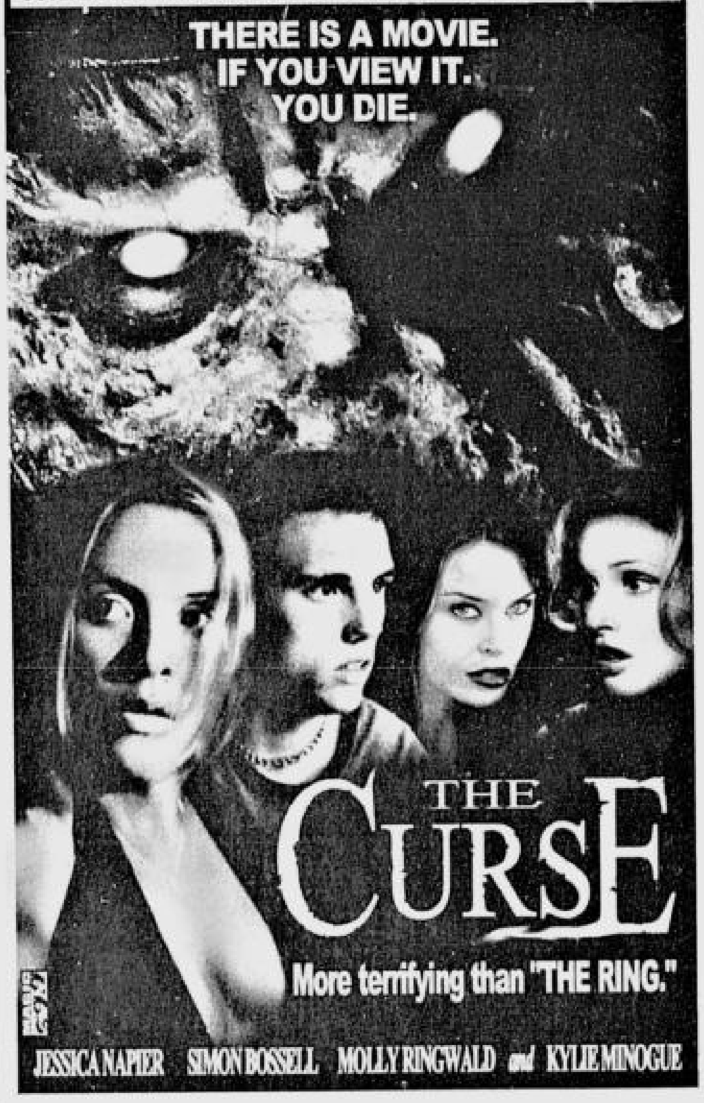

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2	THE GRUDGE 2	10:40, 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 6:40, 8:40, 10:25
3	BUTTERFLY EFFECT	11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:25
4	50 FIRST DATES	10:25, 12:40, 2:55, 5:10, 7:25, 9:40
5	OTSO-OTSO	10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
6	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:25
7	TORQUE	10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:45
8	LOVE ACTUALLY	10:20, 1:10, 4:00, 6:50, 9:40
9	THE CURSE	10:40, 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 6:40, 8:40, 10:25
10	SORUM	11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:25

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Cinema	Movie	Times
1	50 FIRST DATES	10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:40
2	THE GRUDGE 2	11:15, 1:05, 2:55, 4:45, 6:35, 8:25, 10:00
3	HIDALGO	11:00, 1:35, 4:10, 6:45, 9:40
4	THE CURSE	11:15, 1:05, 2:55, 4:45, 6:35, 8:25, 10:00
5	OTSO-OTSO	10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:40
6	BUTTERFLY EFFECT	11:35, 2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 9:40
7	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	10:35, 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:40

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Cinema	Movie	Times
1	THE CURSE	11:50, 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10
2	50 FIRST DATES	11:50, 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10
3	LOVE ACTUALLY	12:40, 3:20, 6:00, 9:00
4	HIDALGO	12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00
5	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
6	THE GRUDGE 2	10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
7	BUTTERFLY EFFECT	10:50, 1:25, 4:00, 6:35, 9:10
8	OTSO-OTSO	11:00, 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00

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Cinema	Movie	Times
1	THE GRUDGE 2	11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
2	OTSO-OTSO	11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
3	BUTTERFLY EFFECT	11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:30
4	THE CURSE	11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
5	HIDALGO	10:40, 12:05, 2:50, 5:35, 8:30
6	TORQUE	10:25, 12:15, 2:05, 3:55, 5:45, 7:35, 9:00
7	50 FIRST DATES	11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
8	LOVE ACTUALLY	11:10, 1:30, 3:50, 6:10, 8:30

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Wizards snap 7-game losing spell

PACERS' Reggie Miller pumps his fist after hitting a three-pointer against the Trailblazers. The Pacers won, 80-71. AP

WASHINGTON—Kwame Brown had career-highs of 30 points and 19 rebounds while playing all 48 minutes Wednesday night as the Washington Wizards snapped a seven-game losing streak by defeating the Sacramento Kings, 114-108.

"He just has a big confidence aura about himself, just taking the ball to the basket," Wizards coach Eddie Jordan said. "He was real sharp with his post moves, his face-ups and finishing at the rim. He was really sharp."

Brown shot 12-for-16 from the field and 6-for-7 from the line, including two freethrows with 23.6 seconds left to give the Wizards a 113-105 lead.

"I just felt confident tonight. I hit a couple of shots, and I felt like I couldn't miss. I wanted the ball every time down," Brown said.

Gilbert Arenas had 27 points, 10 assists, a career-high eight steals and five rebounds. He also played the full game for Washington, which lost at New York in overtime on Tuesday night.

Peja Stojakovic scored 25 points and Mike Bibby added 20 as the Kings lost their third in a row.

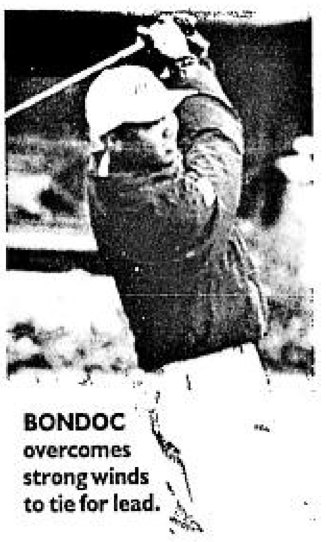
In Boston, Paul Pierce had 28 points and 11 rebounds, and Mark Blount and Chucky Atkins also had double-doubles as Boston downed Denver on St. Patrick's Day. *AP*

Complete results:

Boston 104, Denver 100; Washington 114, Sacramento 108; Indiana 80, Portland 71; Toronto 85, Utah 81; New Orleans 104, Philadelphia 80; Atlanta 111, Dallas 110; LA Lakers 106, LA Clippers 103; Golden State 110, Orlando 85

SAMSUNG GRAND FINALS

Bondoc, Lopez show up Juvic at Malarayat



BONDOC overcomes strong winds to tie for lead.

BATANGAS—It won't be a breeze for the top seed after all.

Young Gene Bondoc and Mark Lopez made sure of that yesterday as they fired similar even par 72s to upstage the heavily favored Juvic Pagunsan in the first round of the Samsung Amateur Tour national grand finals at the Mt. Malarayat Golf and Country Club course here.

Bondoc, who had his national team debut in last year's Putra Cup, and Lopez, brother of swing coach Bong, will carry a one-stroke lead over Pagunsan into today's final round with Jay Bayron and Jovi Neri not too far behind.

Pagunsan, the Philippine Open runner-up, struggled with a 73, and the rest of the finalists failed to conquer the course despite giveaway pin placements as strong winds blew all day.

Bayron scored a 74 while Cebu's Neri submitted a 76 to keep themselves in the hunt for the top prize at stake in this 36-hole culmination of a nationwide tour also sponsored by Mario's Restaurant, Wilson, Gatorade, Tokyo Tokyo, Microtel, Custom Clubmakers, Rogin-E and Dunlop Golf. Radio stations Killer Bee, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-Lite are official media partners.

Bacolod bet JR Tanpinco, Cagayan de Oro's Tristan Tabanas and Ronnie Torrecampo all fumbled with 80s and will have to stage big comebacks in the final round to salvage the cellular phone at stake for the division winner.

Meanwhile, defending champion Remijin Camping and former national titlist Carmelette Villaroman were locked in a tight battle for the Ladies Class A plum in the tourney organized by the Professional Sports Management Group.

Camping and Villaroman both fired 1-under-par 71s to surge ahead by three strokes over Anya Tanpinco.

Eva Miñoza was in fourth place at 76, Gigi Frokjear had an 84 while Oi Swerdloff brought up the rear with her 90.

Lopez came through with five birdies for the day but had the same number of bogeys. Bondoc made three birdies against three bogeys while Juvic could only shoot two birdies that were nullified by three bogeys.

Separate competitions for men's Class A, B and C and ladies B are also being held aside from the national finals of the Samsung Putting Challenge.

Murakami, 2 others ahead

From page A27

Wednesday, Cesar Ababa, Mars Pucay and Ruben Sasutil had identical 74s, with a five-man group led by former Philippine Open champion Robert Pactolerin turning in 75s.

Bisera had the solo lead when he dumped his second shot into a bunker guarding the 18th green and failed to get up and down.

"I'm OK with this round," said Bisera in Filipino. "I really was just going for even par. I think that an even par score would be enough to win this."

The first round scores:

70—R. Bisera 35-35, A. Murakami (a) 34-36, C. La'O 33-37; 71—A. Lascuna 37-34, B. Magada 37-34, R. Alit 36-35, R. Jaraula (a) 36-35, J. Delariarte 35-36; 72—D. Sanchez 35-37, R. Sinfuego 35-37; 73—D. Zarate 37-36, R. Cabajar 37-36, E. Salvador 36-37, E. Bagtas 36-37; 74—L. Rempojo 38-36, C. Ababa 37-37, M. Pucay 36-38, R. Pagunsa 35-39, R. Sasutil 35-39; 75—R. Pactolerin 39-36, A. Fernando 39-36, S. Gines 38-37, A. Cruz 37-38, D. Cruz 36-39

CHESS AGREEMENT

Tagaytay City Mayor Francis Tolentino (seated, center) signs the Memorandum of Agreement with National Chess Federation of the Philippines treasurer Constantino Marcaida (left) and executive director Casto Abundo for the city's hosting of the Asian Cities Chess Team Championship starting Sunday. Standing are Tagaytay City councilors led by Abraham Tolentino (right).

RACING TIPS

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Race 1--1. Early Warning 2. Chase the Wind

Race 2--1. Reign of Roses 2. Kalashnikov 3. Tiny Bubbles

Race 3--1. My Little Pet 2.Queen of D Jungle 3. Top Jay 4. Great Hill 5. Currency

Race 4--1. Doctor Ben 2. St. Emilion 3. Samahan 4. Gold Prosperity 5. Run Doding Fly

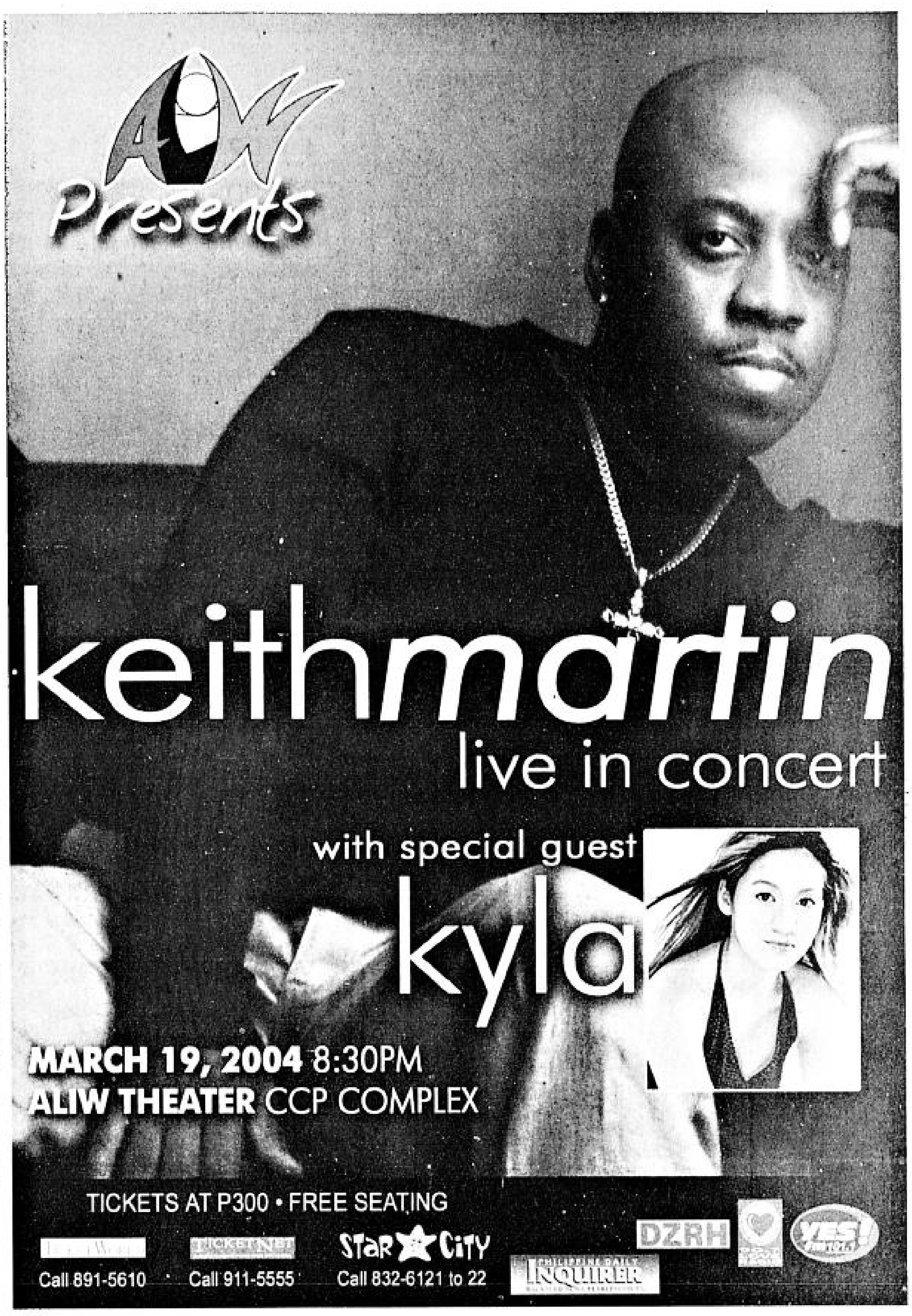
Race 5--1. L'Islet Sur Mer 2.Sheer Courage 3. Miami Belle 4. Pacific Storm 5. Cycles

Race 6--1. Incrediview 2. Morning Nell 3. Rose and Toy 4. Yonder Girl

Race 7--1. Impromptu 2. Flying Free 3. Sir Lawrence 4. Wind Star 5. Kunichiwa

Race 8--1. Noor 2.Angle Gray 3. Blue Sheikh 4. Gimme A Ring/Love and Kisses

Race 9--1. Baby My Beloved 2. Master Kenneth 3. Island King 4. Star Sapphire 5. Cruiser 6. Victory Lap



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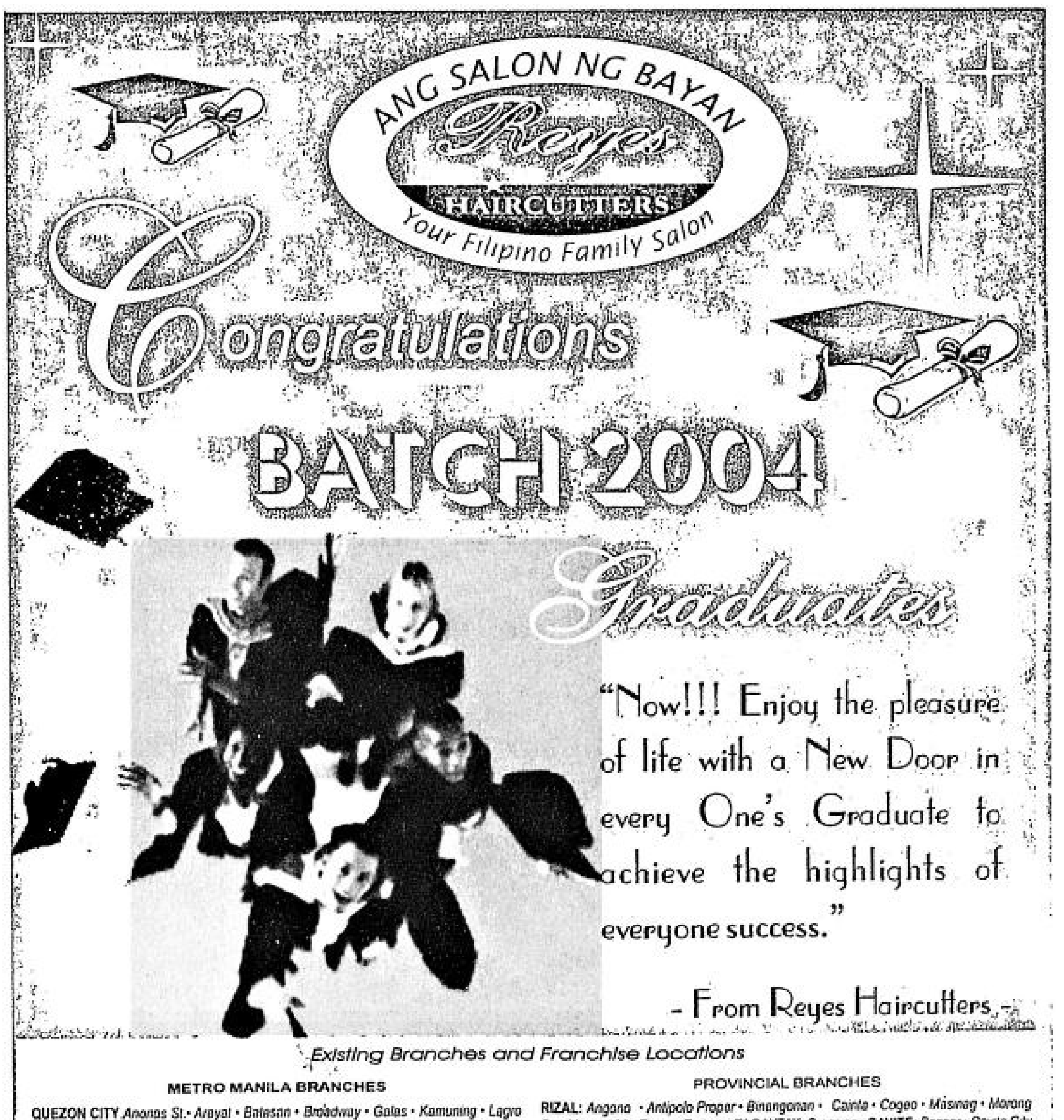

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JVC resumes search for young badminton talents

JVC resumes its search for talents next month as it stages the JVC Open Badminton Championships exclusively for players 14 years old and below.

The organizing IMG (International Management Group) and JVC have tapped the various SM malls as venue sponsor that will bring two monthlong tournaments to Pampanga and Baguio and to Cebu and Iloilo for clinics and exhibition matches.

The tournament will actually be launched on March 27 and 28 with a clinic and exhibition matches at the SM North Edsa while a similar feature is slated April 3-4 at SM Baguio. SM Cebu will have its turn on May 8-9 while SM Iloilo hosts the fourth and last clinic-exhibition show on May 15-16.

Tournament proper kicks off April 16 at the SM Megamall.

Deadline for submission of entries is on April 2. For details, call IMG (Agnes or Joann) at tels. 751-6752/845-0162 or Rene or Timmy at tels. 725-2568/ 725-4942. Drawing of lots will be conducted on April 12 at the 5th level of SM Manila's Entertainment Plaza.

Roddick whips foe, faces Henman next

INDIAN WELLS, California—Third seed Andy Roddick brushed aside Nicolas Escude, 6-3, 6-2, at the Pacific Life Open on Wednesday to set up a quarterfinal showdown with Tim Henman.

The British ninth seed had earlier looked equally as impressive in easing to a 6-1, 6-3 victory over Australia's Wayne Arthurs.

In the women's event, third seeded American Lindsay Davenport continued her march through the injury-depleted draw, dispatching Argentine qualifier Gisela Dulko, 6-3, 6-2 to reach the last four.

Davenport will next meet 19th seed Nathalie Dechy after the Frenchwoman overcame Colombia's Fabiola Zuluaga, 7-6, 6-3, in a late match.

Roddick confirmed his position as the world's fastest server with 17 booming aces against his net-rushing French opponent as he registered a tour-high 20th victory of the season.

He complemented his serve with 33 winners and a brilliant display when returning.

During his most devastating spell, the 21-year-old American sent down four consecutive aces in the fifth game of the first set and added three more in his next service game.

"I feel good," Roddick said.

"I'm in a pretty good groove right now. I just want to keep it up."

Henman, who reached the final here two years ago, put on a solid display against serve-and-volleyer Arthurs, converting all five of his break point opportunities. *Reuters*

Scoop tackles Pacquiao fight

DETAILS of Manny Pacquiao's coming fight against Mexican World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez on May 8 in Las Vegas will be discussed in today's SCOOP sa Kamayan session at the Kamayan Restaurant on Padre Faura St. in Manila. Guests are promoter Murad Muhammad, Pacquiao and business manager Rod Nazario.

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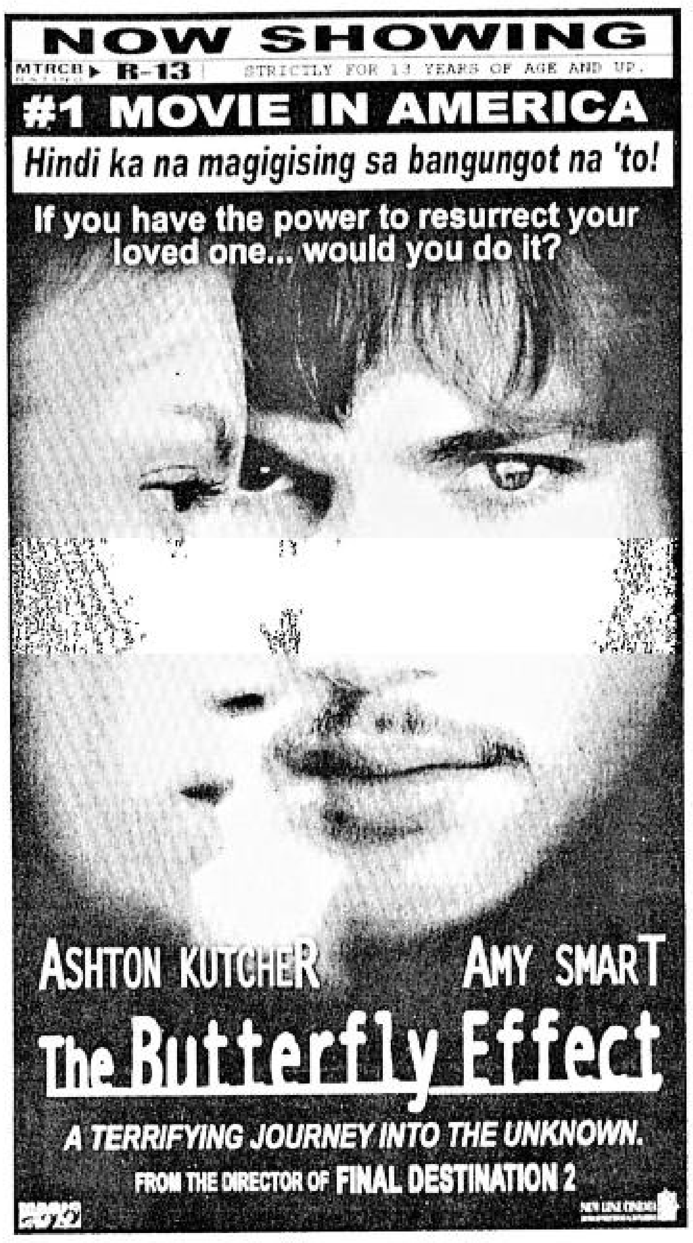
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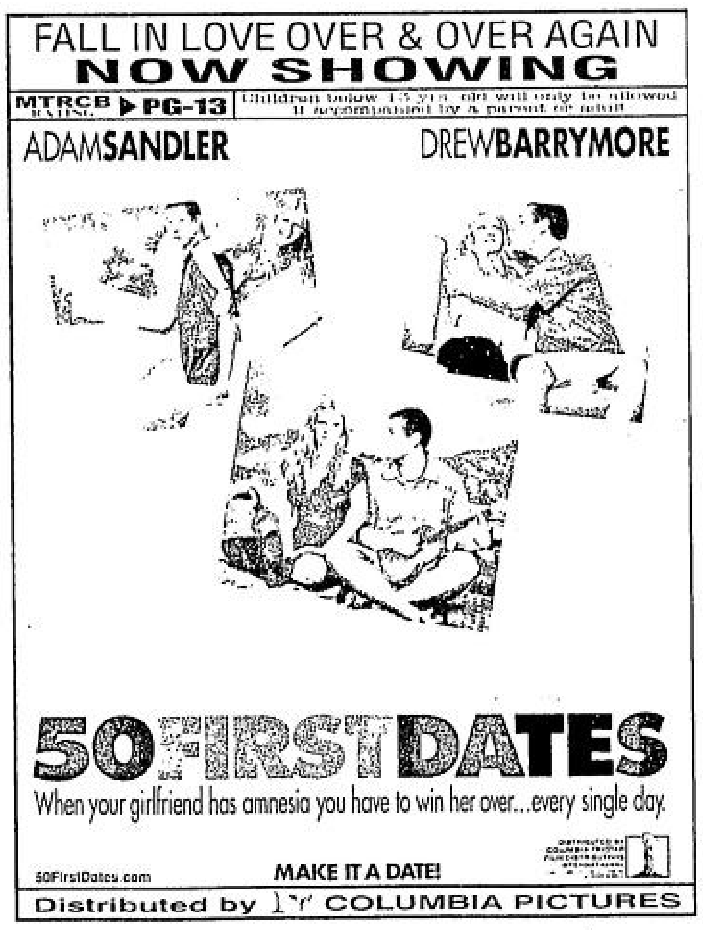
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Comes this most spine chilling and darkest horror masterpiece
WARNING
Chills that lingers kills!
If you have a weak heart
Please don't watch this film
Sorum
THE BIRTH OF EVIL
KIM MYEONG-MIN GI JU-BONG JANG JIN-YEONG(a)
DIRECTED BY: YUN JONG-CHAN

SM CINEMA
what to watch
Romance
50 FIRST DATES
Adam Sandler stars as Henry Roth, an arctic wildlife vet, and Drew Barrymore as Lucy, a young woman with a unique memory disorder. Henry has been spending his spare time breaking the hearts of female tourists. He fears commitment and therefore refuses to become involved with anyone other than tourists and vacationers, but not until he meets Lucy Whitmore (Barrymore). Henry sets out to win her love – everyday and get her to fall in love with him enough to remember him after she wakes up the next morning.
now showing
ADAMSANDLER
DREWBARRYMORE
50FIRSTDATES
MTRCB Rating P13
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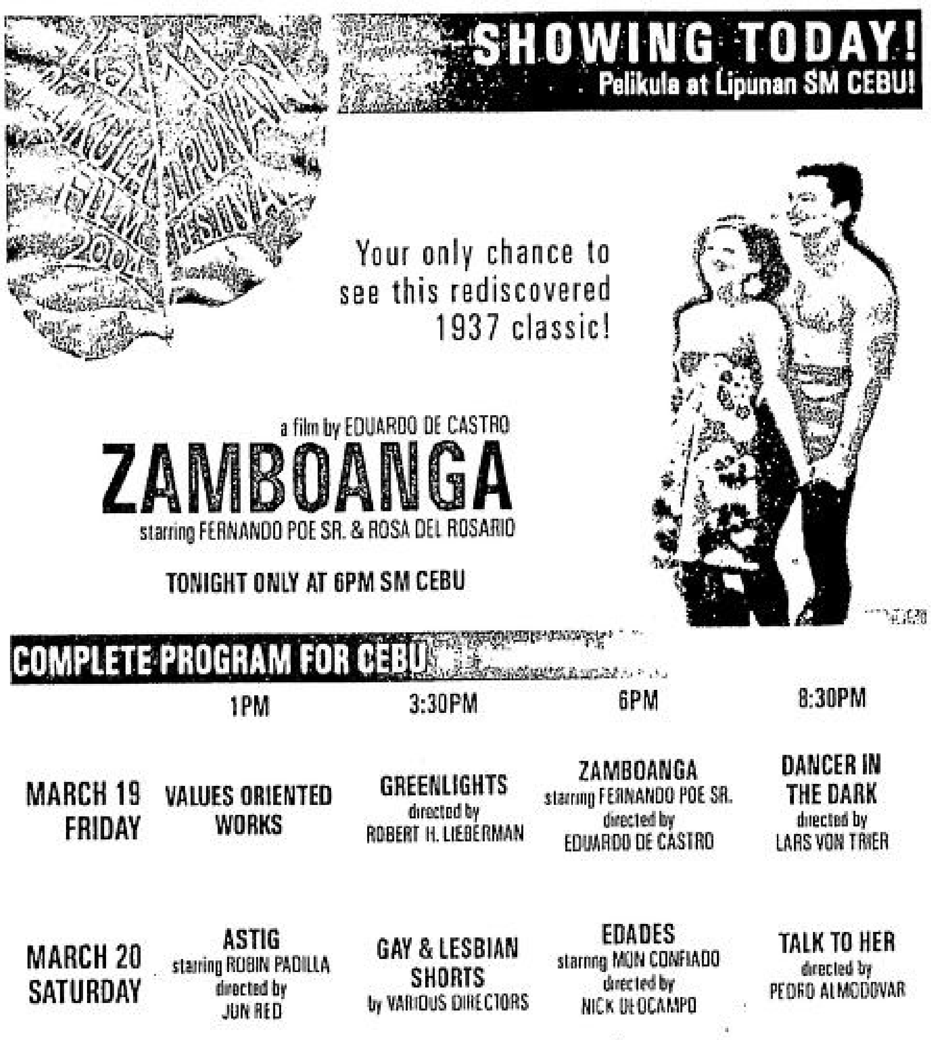
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Your only chance to see this rediscovered 1937 classic!
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ZAMBOANGA
starring FERNANDO POE SR. & ROSA DEL ROSARIO
TONIGHT ONLY AT 6PM SM CEBU
COMPLETE PROGRAM FOR CEBU

	1PM	3:30PM	6PM	8:30PM
MARCH 19 FRIDAY	VALUES ORIENTED WORKS	GREENLIGHTS directed by ROBERT H. LIEBERMAN	ZAMBOANGA starring FERNANDO POE SR. directed by EDUARDO DE CASTRO	DANCER IN THE DARK directed by LARS VON TRIER
MARCH 20 SATURDAY	ASTIG starring ROBIN PADILLA directed by JUN RED	GAY & LESBIAN SHORTS by VARIOUS DIRECTORS	EDADES starring MON CONFIADO directed by NICK DEOCAMPO	TALK TO HER directed by PEDRO ALMODOVAR

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ANG BUONG KATOTOHANAN SA ILALIM NG DAGAT.

ANG BUONG KATOTOHANAN
SA METRO MANILA, LUZON, VISAYAS AT MINDANAO.

ANG BUONG KATOTOHANAN
SA MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AMERICA, EUROPE
AT KUNG SAAN MAYROONG PILIPINO.

SUBOK SA SERBISYO. SUBOK NA TOTOO.

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NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS
MAAASAHAN
HINDI LAMANG SA SALITA. SUBOK NA SA GAWA.

SPORTS

Singapore joins jr tilt

IT'S go for the 4th South East Asia Junior Basketball Championship after Singapore confirmed its participation to the tournament which will be held in Lucena City from April 14-19.

Singapore's inclusion brought the participating teams to five, including the RP Youth Team coached by Johnny Tam. Tam will be assisted by Ching Marcelino.

The other entries in the tournament organized and sanctioned by the Basketball Association of the Philippines are defending champion Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia.

Tam will be banking on San Beda's Ogi Menor and JR Taganas, last year's holdover Kevin Astorga of International School, Darryl Bautista of Adamson, Michael Haw Sy of Xavier University and Jay Cruz of UST.

7 Lakes tournament set March 25

EVERYTHING is set for the Panasonic-NBC (National Basketball Conference) 7 Lakes Invitational tournament on March 25-28 at the Aquino gym in San Pablo City.

Hosted by San Pablo City Mayor Florante "Boy" Aquino and sponsored by Sulpicio Lines, the four-day cagefest will serve as one of the pre-season events of the NBC.

The UA-Pampanga Pelicans of Msgr. Edgardo Pangan, Gil Cortez and coach Alexis Gonzales, the Adamson University Falcons of coach Luigi Trillo, the Cagayan de Oro cagers of coach Andy Calingin and Ferdinand Sanchez and the Spring Cooking Oil-San Pablo 7 Lakers of Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Mayor Aquino are entered.

Mayor's Golf Cup at VGC

THE FIRST Mayor's Golf Cup Classic will be held on March 26 at the Villamor Golf Club.

Sponsors are Petron, San Miguel Corporation, Philippine Amusements and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) and Columbia Airfreight Complex Inc., Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, SM, Philtranco, Federal Express and Samsung Electronics.

"This early, I would like to thank these nine generous companies for helping our tournament," Pasay City Mayor Pee Wee Trinidad said yesterday. "Their support will go a long way."

Organizing committee chair is Jun Amante with Maj. Gen. Charlie Tanega as co-chair. Brig. Gen. Francisco "Paco" Atayde and Commodore Danny Pizarro are the other members of the organizing committee.

5-cock final on

MORE than 75 quality and exciting fights are scheduled in today's "Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA) 5-Cock Derby" championship round at the Pasay City Cockpit. Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan Mite Free, Sagupaan B-50 Forten and Sagupaan Complexor 3000 are the sponsors.

At stake is a guaranteed prize of P1 million, said PCC pit managers Oscar Gonzales, Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano.

Meanwhile, another special 4-cock derby sizzles on March 26.

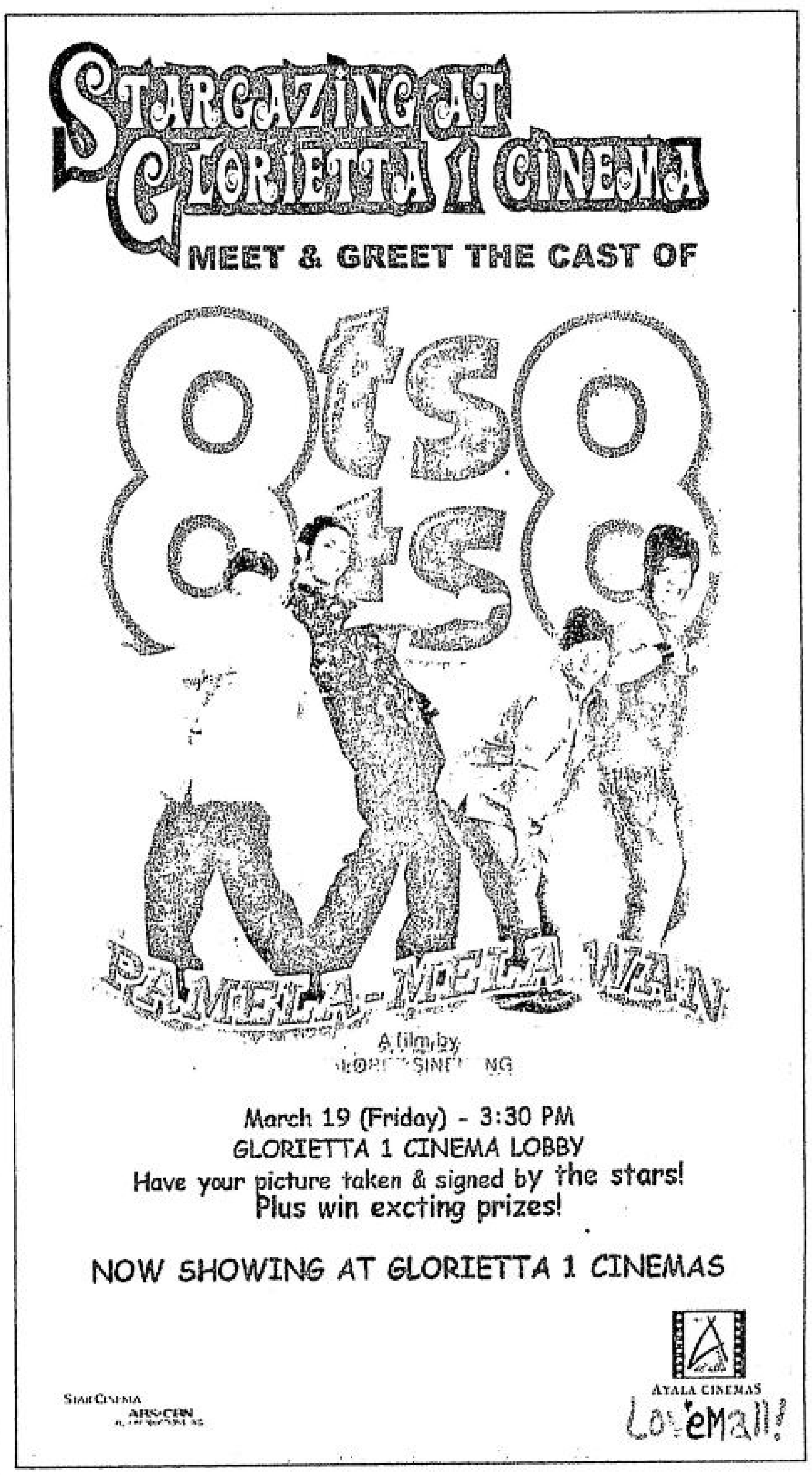
For details, contact 843-1746, 843-1890 and 816-6750.

₱70,000 chessfest

YAKULT Phils. Inc. leads the early entries in the P70,000 Inter-Commercial Chess team tournament which has been moved to April 17-18 at the Starmall located at the corner of Edsa and Shaw Blvd. in Mandaluyong City.

The chessfest is open to private and government firms, schools or universities. Each team must have four regular players and one alternate. Members of the team must be bona fide employees of companies or varsity players of schools they are representing. For details, call MCC at 826-8560 and 0916-852-1069.

OPENS MARCH 24
MAG-INGAT SA KALSADA.... SUMPA AT MALAGIM NA KAMATAYAN SAYO'Y NAGHIHINTAY.
EVIL HITS THE ROAD
JIM CAVIEZEL RHONA MITRA
HIGHWAYMEN



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OTSO OTSO PAMELA-MELA WAN
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March 19 (Friday) - 3:30 PM
GLORIETTA 1 CINEMA LOBBY
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Plus win exciting prizes!
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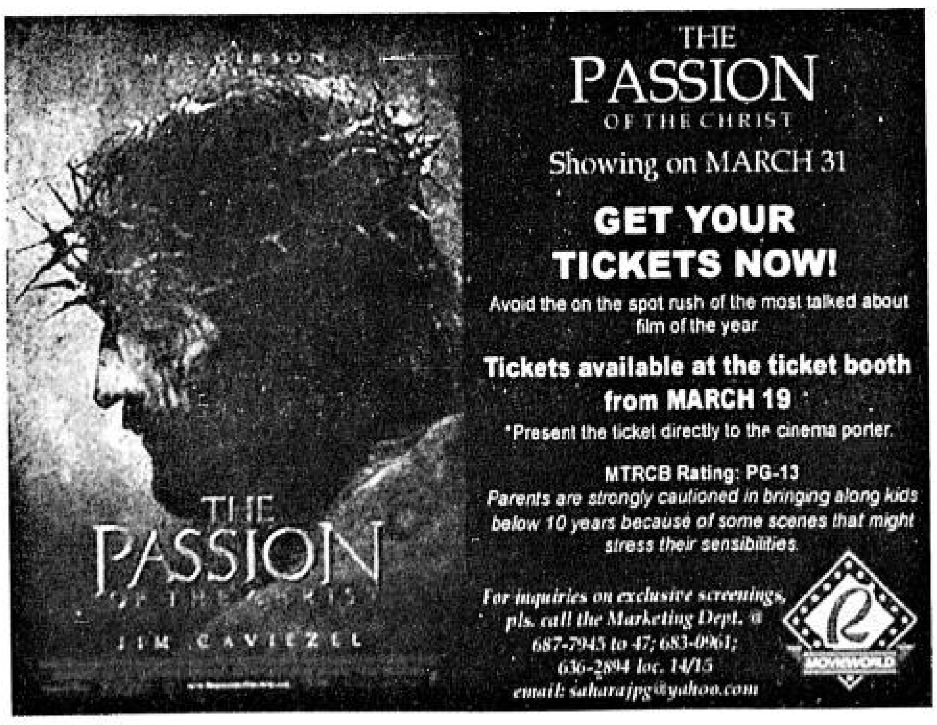

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Showing on MARCH 31
GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!
Avoid the on the spot rush of the most talked about film of the year
Tickets available at the ticket booth from MARCH 19
*Present the ticket directly to the cinema porter.
MTRCB Rating: PG-13
Parents are strongly cautioned in bringing along kids below 10 years because of some scenes that might stress their sensibilities.
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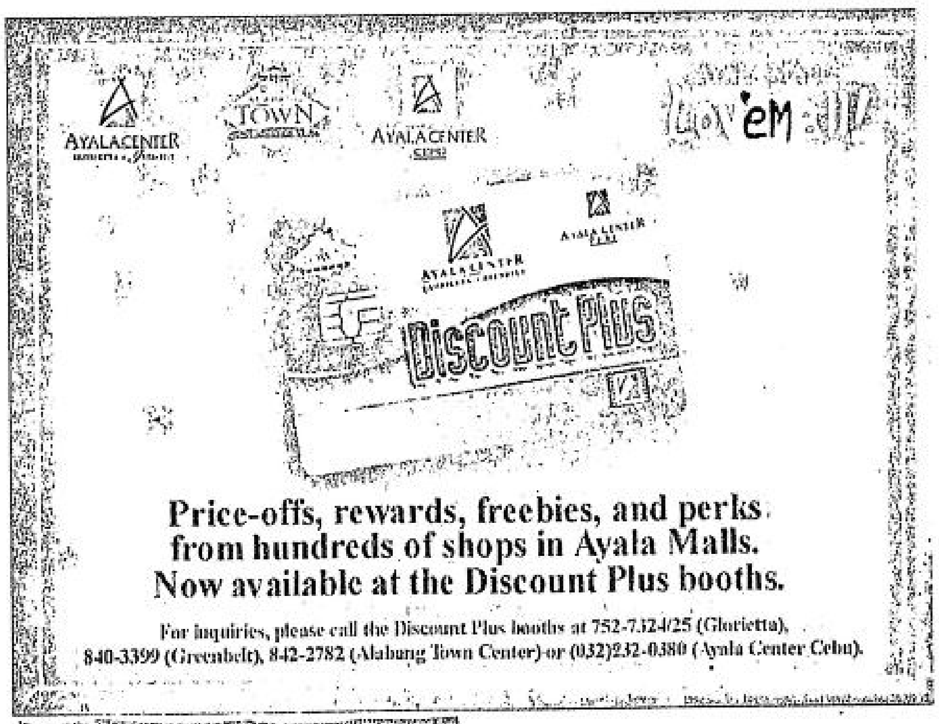

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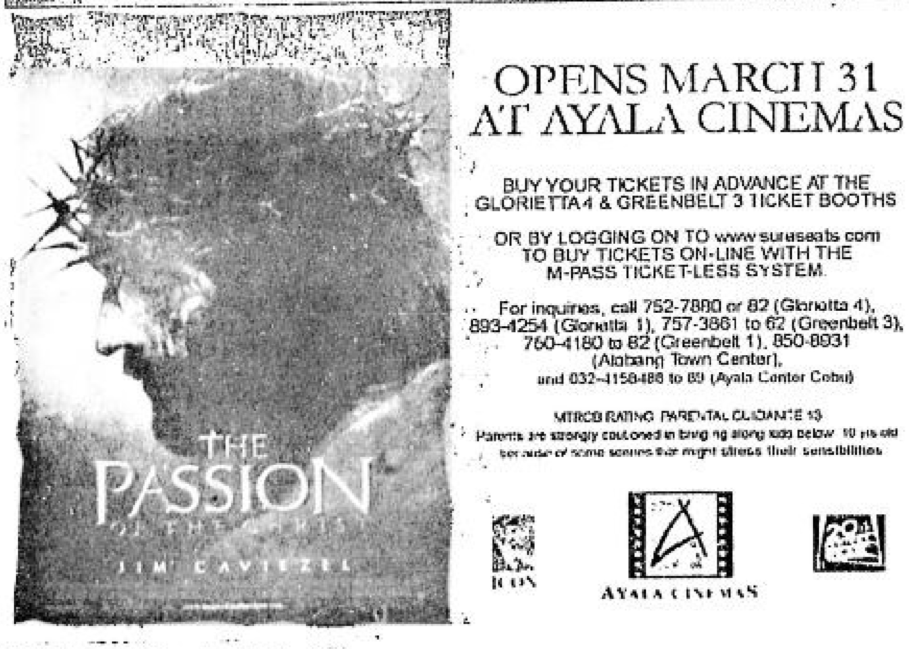
How far would you go, how much would you sacrifice to get back what you have lost?
From Ron Howard and Brian Grazer, the Oscar-winning director-producer team of A BEAUTIFUL MIND comes THE MISSING, an action-filled suspense thriller and a powerful drama of love, forgiveness and redemption
"Powerful and provocative. The Missing is another masterful production from one of the industry's best directors and two of its best actors."
-- Paul Clinton, CNN
FOR SCREENING SCHEDULE, PLS. CALL 729-777
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)



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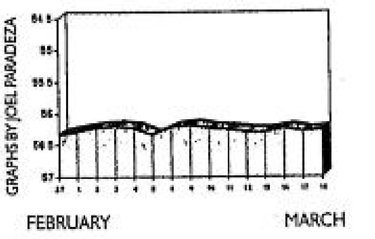


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 56.27 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 18, 2004

¥ 107.08 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 18, 2004

GOLD: $399.60-400.10

per ounce Hong Kong, March 16, 2004

March 18, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.817127	1.000000	56.2370
Japan	Yen	0.007551	0.009241	0.5197
United Kingdom	Pound	1.484148	1.816300	102.1433
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.104889	0.128363	7.2188
Switzerland	Franc	0.639880	0.783085	44.0384
Canada	Dollar	0.610753	0.747440	42.0338
Singapore	Dollar	0.481059	0.588720	33.1078
Australia	Dollar	0.602956	0.737898	41.4972
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.168653	2.653998	149.2529
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.217895	0.266660	14.9962
Brunei	Dollar	0.479647	0.586992	33.0107
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000096	0.000117	0.0066
Thailand	Baht	0.020703	0.025336	1.4248
UAE	Dirham	0.222481	0.272272	15.3118
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.223800	68.8228
Argentina	Peso	0.282499	0.345722	19.4424
Brazil	Real	0.280607	0.343407	19.3122
Denmark	Kroner	0.134294	0.164349	9.2425
India	Rupee	0.018098	0.022148	1.2455
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215062	0.263193	14.8012
Mexico	New Peso	0.074555	0.091241	5.1311
New Zealand	Dollar	0.528509	0.646789	36.3735
South Africa	Rand	0.121594	0.148807	8.3685
Korea	Won	0.000701	0.000858	0.0483
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024649	0.030166	1.6964
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000427	0.000522	0.0294

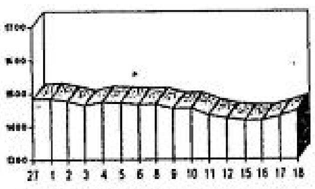
Stocks end 1.15% up

STOCKS yesterday rose to their highest in six days, driven by bargain-hunting on select blue chips led by dominant phone firm PLDT and property leader Ayala Land Inc.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT) rose 2.2

STOCKS/ B6

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday said it would take over private water distributor Maynilad Water Services Inc in lieu of unpaid concession fees of about P8 billion.

The government will receive a 61-percent stake worth almost the same amount and currently held by conglomerate Benpres Holdings Corp.

The move was part of a reorganization of Maynilad that was announced yesterday by the government. It said in a statement that the deal would ensure continuous water supply to the west zone of the capital.

Maynilad, which was ordered by a Paris-based arbitration panel to pay the overdue amount last year, had filed a petition in a local court seeking debt relief and corporate rehabilitation.

Local creditors led by Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company (Metrobank) also agreed to convert P3 billion in debt to convertible and preferred stock.

After the reorganization, the government, represented by regulator Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), will hold a 61-percent stake in the company; French utility Suez will own 30 percent; Metrobank will hold 3 percent, and employees will own 6 percent.

Benpres is controlled by the Lopez family, which also has huge stakes in the nation's largest media network, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. and dominant power distributor Manila Electric Company.

The deal forged by Benpres and MWSS for Maynilad aimed to bail out Maynilad while ensuring that it would pay the P8 billion in unpaid concession fees, the Department of Justice said yesterday.

Justice Undersecretary Manuel A.J. Teehankee, who supervised the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (adviser of MWSS in the negotiations), said the plan called for the complete write-off of all equity of Maynilad's shareholders--the Benpres Group and the Suez Group--to cover accumulated losses; a partial conversion of debt to equity and restructuring of the debt, and the immediate drawing of $50 million from Maynilad's performance bond of $150 million.

Teehankee said the plan would reduce Maynilad's liabilities from P19 billion to around P11-P12 billion.

"This reorganization preserves the financial and public interest of the government, as represented by the MWSS, while avoiding the risks associated with terminating a concessionaire and taking over Maynilad," Teehankee said.

Teehankee said the plan would be submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission as well as the Quezon City Regional Trial Court hearing the rehabilitation petition of Maynilad, for necessary approval. *Philip Tubeza and Reuters*

DBP to relend ₱57B in ODA funds for infra projects

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE STATE-OWNED Development Bank of the Philippines is set to relend about P57 billion in official development assistance (ODA) funds for infrastructure development.

DBP president Simon Paterno said Wednesday night that the priority sectors included social infrastructure support such as health care, education and housing, as well as production infrastructure facilities to increase capacity and capacity utilization.

Paterno also said the bank would also focus on distribution infrastructure support, such as the road ro-ro (roll-on, roll-off) terminal system, bulk grains highway, logistics development projects and environmental management.

The bank reported loan approvals of P10.53 billion in 2003, or 70 percent better than a year ago.

Paterno also said loan releases last year likewise rose by 89 percent to P10.24 billion from a year ago.

"If we translate this in terms of job opportunities and livelihood generated, we helped create over 11,000 jobs for our people last year, and generated P1.9 billion in taxes," Paterno said.

Taken cumulatively over the past 14 years, Paterno said this was equivalent to 112,931 jobs generated and P24.3 billion in taxes paid to the government.

He said 91 percent of the total number of projects that the DBP had financed were in the micro, cottage, and SME sector.

Paterno added that the countryside continued to receive the bulk of the bank's wholesale funds. Out of 263 projects financed in 2003, 68 percent or 180 projects were located outside the National Capital Region.

DBP/B3

OFW remittances seen down in '04

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas expects remittances from Overseas Filipino Workers to grow by only 3 percent this year to $7.83 billion as fewer Filipinos are getting jobs abroad.

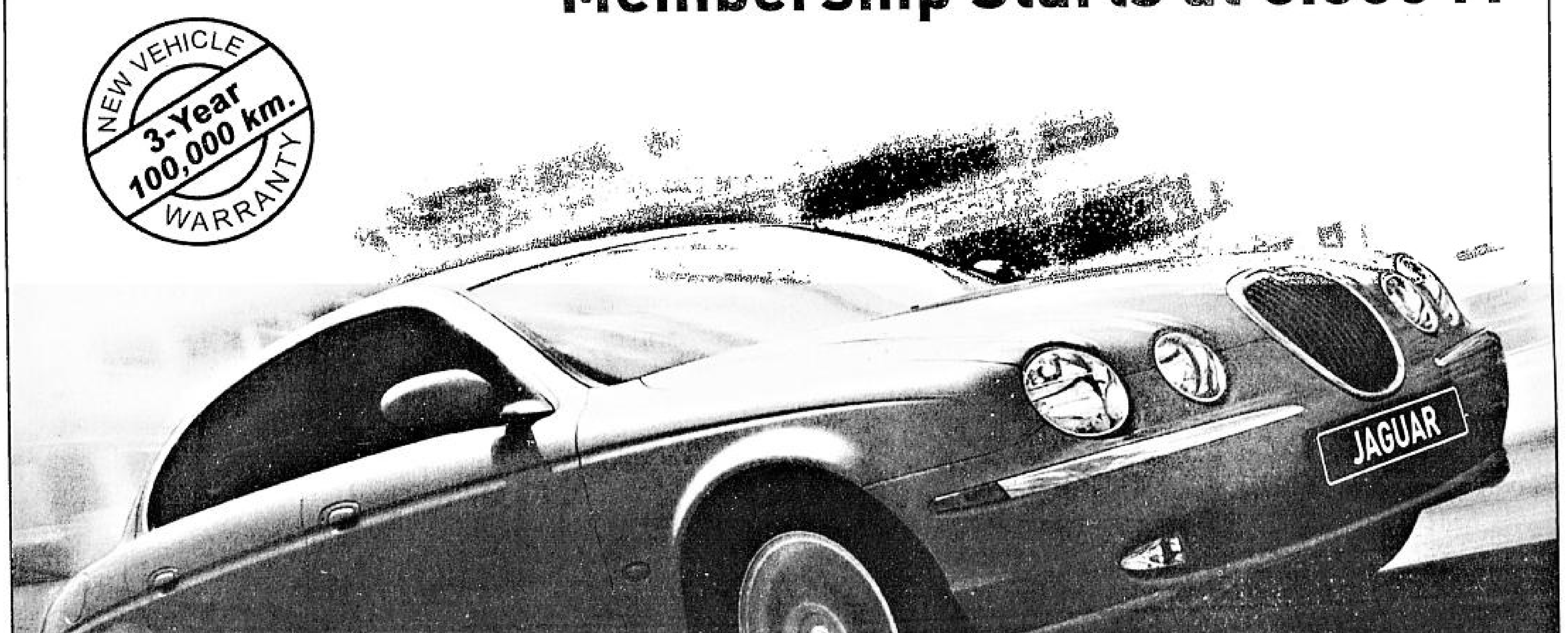
In a press briefing yesterday, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the BSP expected a slowdown in the deployment of workers this year as an increasing number of jobs are going to workers from other developing countries who are willing to work for less pay.

As a result, the growth in OFW remittances this year would come far short of the 6.3 percent expansion last year to $7.64 billion.

"We're facing a lot of competition from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh," Buenaventura said, explaining why the BSP had set a "conservative" target for OFW remittances.

The Philippines relies heavily on huge remittances from OFWs to boost domestic consumer demand and improve its Gross Interna-

OFW/B3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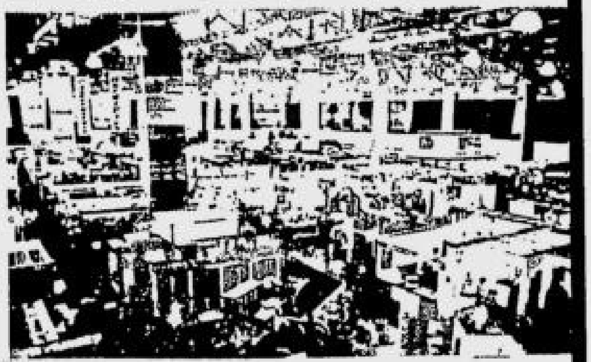

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RP to invoke treaty for telecom carriers

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PHILIPPINES is planning to invoke a legal treaty with the United States to help defend local telecom carriers from US government charges that they are behaving like a cartel.

National Telecommunications Commission Chair Ronald Solis said he met with Justice Secretary Merceditas Gutierrez a couple of week ago to discuss updates on the US grand jury investigation of the alleged anti-competitive behavior of Philippine telecom firms.

The US justice department last January served subpoenas to 30 Filipino telecom executives attending a conference in Hawaii. The executives were ordered to appear before a grand jury in Honolulu to answer the charges of price-fixing.

The executives were also asked to bring with them vital documents.

Solis said the justice official brought up the possibility of invoking the mutual legal assistance treaty with the US to prevent the Americans from issuing subpoenas to local telecom executives compelling them to produce company documents.

"We are looking at the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty with the US on the anti-trust case," according to Solis. "We can invoke a provision that says the request for documents must be coursed through the diplomatic channels of both governments."

Apart from the bilateral treaty, the NTC last month said that local carriers could also invoke a presidential decree prohibiting vital Philippine industries from presenting documents that could compromise the nation's interest.

But Solis said that before the local telecom firms could use these defenses, the justice department must first issue a favorable legal opinion.

He added that the justice department has to decide whether or not the telecom sector qualifies as a vital industry.

An executive of a local carrier said that while the hearings on the US anti-trust case are ongoing, there has been no opportunity to invoke the decree Solis cited.

Presidential Decree No. 1718 aims to promote local industries and protect strategic businesses supporting the country's development agenda.

The US legal action in January revived a dispute between American and Filipino telecom firms over termination rates, which are paid by foreign carriers to complete calls on the networks of local carriers.

S. Korea backs Southrail project

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday announced the start of the rehabilitation and modernization of the Philippine National Railways' south commuter line (Southrail) this year after getting a $50-million loan from the Korean government.

In a speech during the 3rd UP Public Lectures on the Philippine Presidency and Administration, Ms Macapagal said her government had been moving to upgrade the country's rail system with "(South) Korea financing the South Railroad."

The President noted that the Korean participation in Southrail came after the government successfully negotiated China's participation in the North Luzon Railway (Northrail) project. She expressed optimism that the government would soon sign the first of several Mindanao railroad agreements by next month.

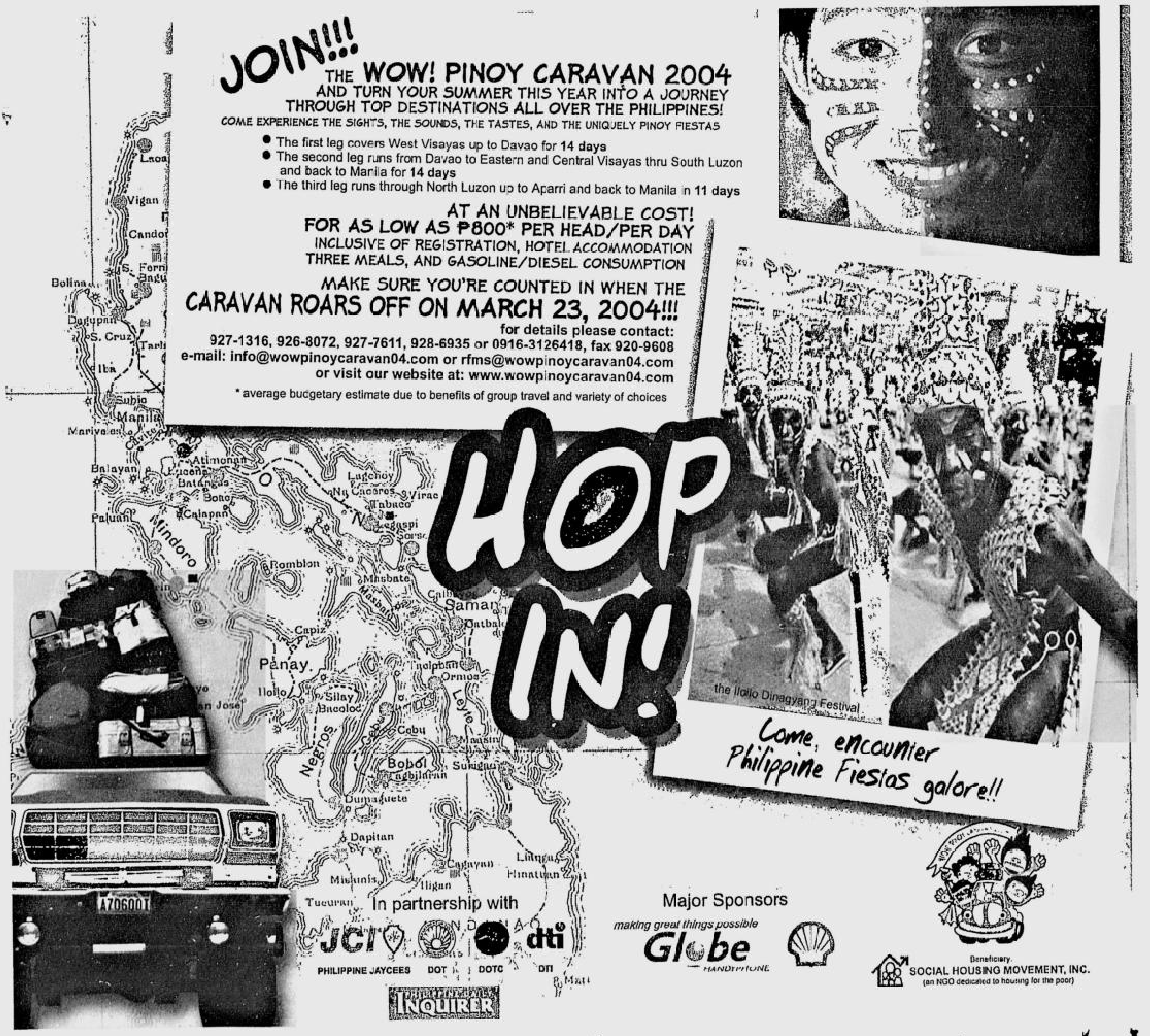
National Economic and Development Authority chief Romulo Neri said that the Department of Finance is expected to sign before the end of this month Southrail's loan facility from South Korea's Export-Import Bank ($15 million) and Economic Development Cooperation Fund ($35 million).

Neri said the government would bid out the project contract within the year in time for its targeted operation within 2 to 3 years.

The Southrail project would cover PNR's 36-kilometer railway from Caloocan City to Alabang and provide an alternative route for residents in the fast-rising provinces south of Metro Manila.

Neri said Korea's financing of Southrail was similar to China's entry in the Northrail project, albeit on a smaller scale.

Last month, the Export-Import Bank of China approved the Philippine government's request for a $400-million loan for the Northrail project. The loan would mature in 20 years, inclusive of a five-year grace period, with an annual interest rate of 3 percent.



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'News' for sale

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE SAN FRANCISCO-BASED Philippine News is set to change ownership again.

Ambassador to the United Kingdom Edgardo Espiritu, who acquired it only during the Erap years from the founding publisher, martial law activist Alex Esclamado, has agreed to dispose of the Bay Area weekly in favor of Manila Times publisher Dante Ang.

Espiritu returned to London last week after wrapping up negotiations with Ang. Despite agreeing on the price and other takeover terms, the two parties have yet to confirm the agreement in writing.

The takeover, if it should eventually push through, would most likely happen after the May elections.

Philippine News, which claims to be the largest circulated of all the Filipino-American papers with its East Coast edition, is supposedly breaking even despite being hit hard by the latest round of postage price increase. It is not clear why Espiritu decided to dispose of the newspaper, but apparently the sell-out is related to the rumored financial woes that have continued to dodge the banker/ex-finance secretary as a result of the Wincorp fiasco.

Cutting survey gravy

MANILA Standard owner, port services king Enrique Razon Jr., has decided to slash costs and bypass SWS and Pulse Asia for the paper's periodic political surveys by hiring direct the field work sub-contractor being used by the two survey firms.

According to the grapevine, both SWS and Pulse Asia tack on an almost 100 percent surcharge, on top of the subcontractor's fee, for designing the survey questions and interpreting the survey results .

What Razon apparently ordered was to simply re-commission the same survey questions for his newspaper's latest survey, which, incidentally, showed FPJ and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo still running neck-and-neck for the lead despite the actor's recent Supreme Court victory.

Tomorrow, perhaps

TODAY was supposed to have been relaunched as a business paper last Monday but it looks like the daily would still continue as a political paper as had been envisioned by the founding publisher, Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr., notwithstanding the infusion of new capital from telecom tycoon Antonio Cojuangco Jr.

Cojuangco pointman, now Today president/business editor Jose Galang, would only answer a cryptic "patience, patience" to questions about the supposed makeover.

Galang, as expected, would not disclose what kind of quid pro quo had been reached, if there were any, on the Cojuangco entry.

But on the basis of the editorial box, it looks like Locsin, and his brother Enrique, incidentally a Malacañang nominee for the Philcomsat board, still retain editorial control of Today.

ABS-CBN hit list

OVER at ABS-CBN, news and public affairs boss Ricardo "Dong" Puno has embarked on a downsizing mission by offering early retirement packages to a select few, in addition to the three who have already moved to Channel 5.

The hit list has a common denominator, the discussion of which is more appropriate for the raunchier entertainment columns.

Heard through the grapevine

CARMEN de Venecia-Lim, one of the four PDIC nominees in the resuscitated Philippine Bank of Communications, is a sister of the Speaker and mother of Mike Arroyo PR consultant Ruben Lim.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

DBP to relend . . .

From page B1

Over the past 14 years, he noted that 57.8 percent of the P109 billion total releases, or P63 billion, was channeled to the rural areas.

DBP also named its top participating financial institutions under its wholesale lending operations during an appreciation program Wednesday night.

For the fourth consecutive year, Bank of the Philippine Islands was named the most outstanding participating financial institution for all around performance as it turned in the most balanced and substantial participation in all DBP wholesale lending facilities in 2003.

BPI was also cited for its outstanding performance under the Industrial Guarantee and Loan Fund-commercial bank category and Japan Bank for International Cooperation's facilities for large-scale and shipping industries.

OFW . . .

From page B1

tional Reserves.

With the slower inflows from OFW remittances coupled with the decline in exports, the BSP projects that the GIR this year would only hit $15 billion compared to $16.87 billion last year.

"The GIR is an important number that the government has to carefully monitor, but it's not the BSP's sole responsibility," Buenaventura said.

However, he assured the public that the projected GIR this year was still good enough considering the country's "present situation."

The BSP chief has been saying that the first semester of this year was a "lost cause" due to uncertainties over the May presidential elections.

Doris C. Dumlao

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* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission

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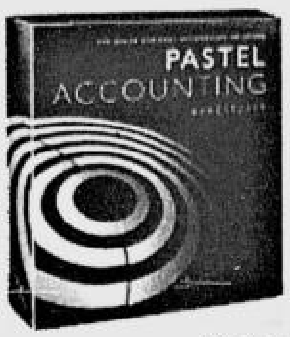

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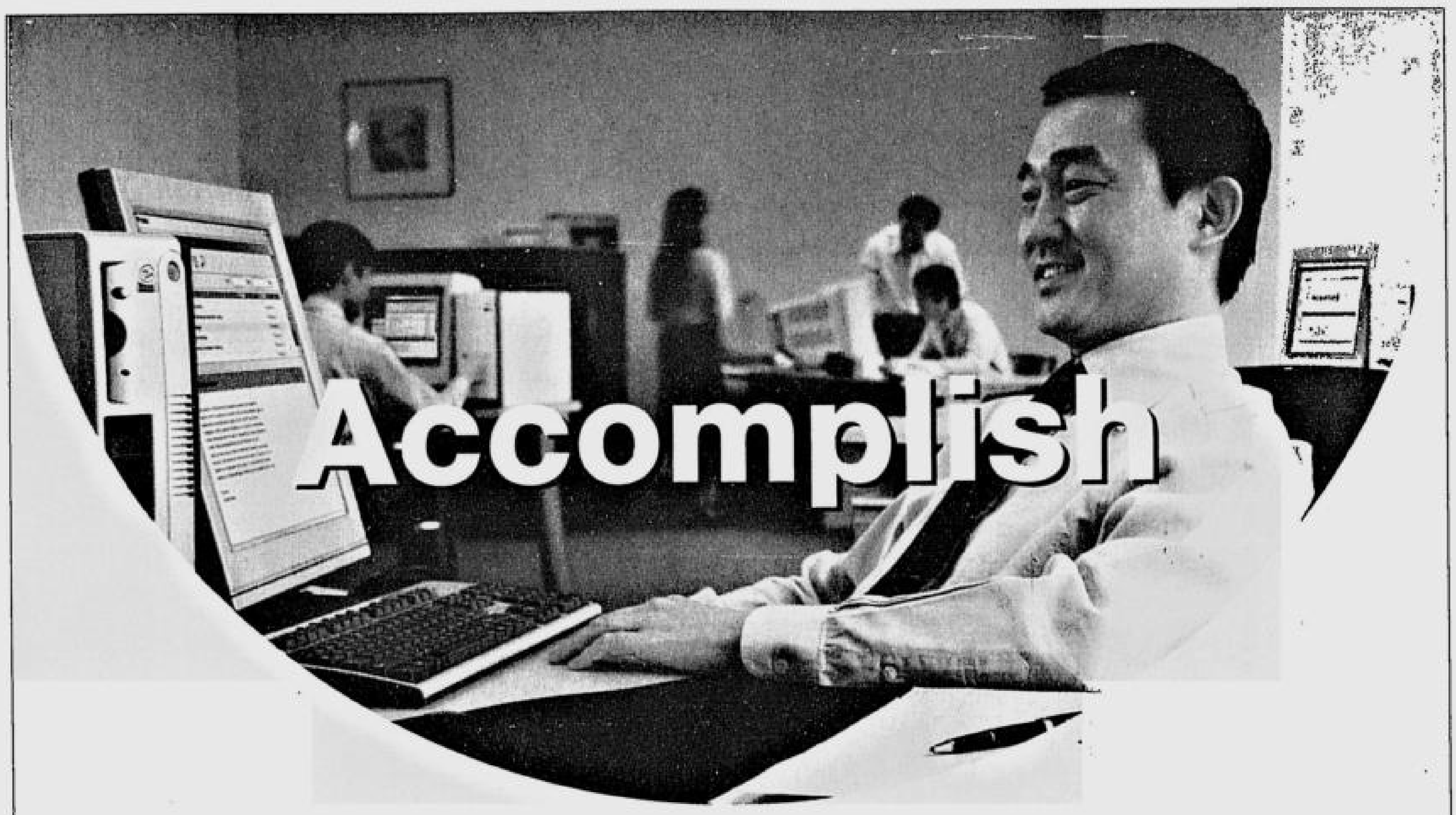

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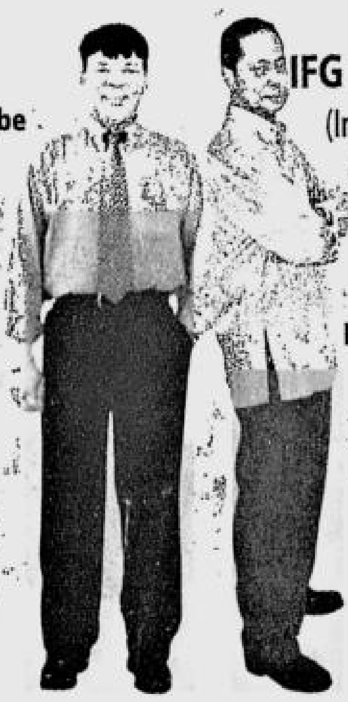

Roque G. Borbe
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Leo Regaliza
2nd Place

AGENCY MANAGER

From Left: **Minerva Santos (5th Place), Ma. Rosabel De Vera (2nd Place), Ana Marie Borbe (1st Place), Aveleth Tabudlo (3rd Place), Teresita Manalo (4th Place)**

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

From Left: **Jeremy Feria (5th Place), Rodolfo Esteban (2nd Place), Anna Leah Regaliza (1st Place), Reynaldo Sagabay (4th Place) & Janet Almazan (3rd Place).**

OTHER WINNERS FOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

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6th Place

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7th Place

Felipe De Guzman
8th Place

Paul Allan Ong
9th Place

Marcial Tenedero
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AGENCY MANAGER
Ana Marie Borbe

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Globalization and the Philippine tuna industry

COMMENTARY

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

JOSEPH Stiglitz, a Nobel Laureate in economics, said: "The essence of globalization is that it should bring job security. If the contrary is happening, economic instability and social insecurity leading to violence is likely to happen ... The path to economic globalization must be changed in order to avoid undermining job security."

Initially, the attractiveness of globalization and its accompanying rapid trade liberalization was very appealing to many in the Philippine government. They believed the neo-liberal myth that a rapidly liberalized and globalized market is good for the Filipinos. They would have more choices from the additional imported products. These products would also be cheaper. Thus, more goods could be bought for the same peso.

Risks in Globalization

However, no society can subsist on consumption alone. Cheap goods for a person without income is meaningless because there will be no money to buy these goods. In the Philippines, because of very rapid trade liberalization, we have cheaper imported products. But this has come at the great cost of lost jobs and incomes.

Theoretically, the displaced and other jobless people should have found employment in areas where we have "comparative advantage." But realistically, not enough of these job opportunities exist as of now. The result is that today, there are more jobless people than at any time in our history. Globalization, as Stiglitz predicted, has indeed resulted in undermining job security.

The tuna industry

Three days ago, last March 17, the Tambuyog Development Center (TDC) filed a case at the Quezon City Regional Trial Court to nullify Fisheries Administrative Order No. 195 (FAO 195) because it allegedly violates the Fisheries Code. This order allows Taiwanese and other foreign fishing vessels to import non-export grade tuna fish daily at the Davao Fish Port.

According to TDC executive director Arsenio Tanchuling, FAO 195 goes against Section 42 of the Fisheries Code because the latter does not allow any fish importation via transshipment. It also contradicts FAO 199 which, in defining transshipment, makes no allowance for the transshipped goods to enter the domestic market. "But despite our three letters of complaint against the said order last year," he said, "the DA officials continue to ignore the matter."

Loss of jobs

In the short run, the consumers benefit from this order because of lower tuna prices. Taiwanese tuna is sold at P60 per kilo in the wet market; local tuna is P120. Emmanuel de la Cruz, a fisherfolk leader and co-petitioner in the court case, says: "The imported tuna is cheaper because the Taiwanese have access to cheaper oil in Indonesia by virtue of a fishery access agreement between Taiwan and Indonesia. This is a subsidy the Taiwanese get that we do not receive from our government. This is unfair competition."

TDC's James Escober Jr. says that aside from the Taiwanese fishers buying diesel fuel at P6 to P7 per liter lower than our local price of P17, they also enjoy other subsidies that our tuna handliners do not. Though this form of freer trade with Taiwanese fishers is better for our consumers because of lower tuna prices, the Filipino fisherfolk who have lost their jobs complain that this is not fair trade.

The amounts involved are not insignificant. De la Cruz says that as much as 1.2 metric tons of tuna are sold in the local wet markets. These sales are prohibited by an order that mandates all tuna sold through transshipments can be sold only to institutional buyers. Therefore, this quantity does even include the amount sold legitimately to these buyers.

The result is that, in General Santos alone, the fishing boats of tuna handliners have decreased from 119 to 48. At the rate of 20 fishers per boat, this means a loss of 1,428 jobs.

More than legality

Though TDC is taking this case to court on legal grounds, the greater issue is the correctness of government policy toward globalization and trade liberalization. Will we sacrifice people's jobs to provide possibly only short term lower prices for our consumers? In many cases, once the domestic competition has been killed, the foreign suppliers of these imported products increase their prices. We are then at their mercy because we have no choice.

And if we import these products, should we do so with tariff rates that would result in an amount much less than the subsidies given to these imported products? While this would be freer trade, it would definitely not be fair trade.

Conclusion

We believe globalization is inevitable, but it would be advantageous to us only if we have the right form of trade liberalization. The importation of subsidized tuna through transshipment with zero tariff is not the right form. It has caused the loss of jobs and threatens the tuna industry's survival. While there is a legal issue, the bigger issue is government policy toward trade liberalization. The government

GLOBALIZATION/ B8

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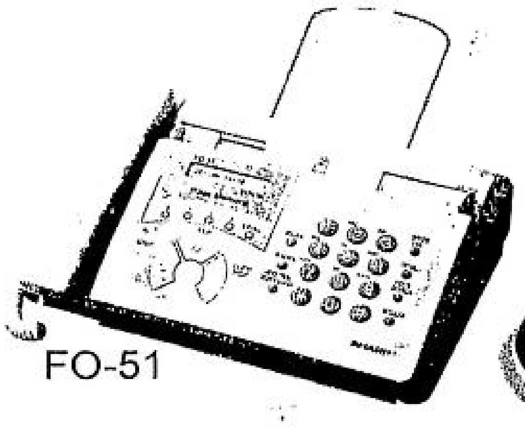

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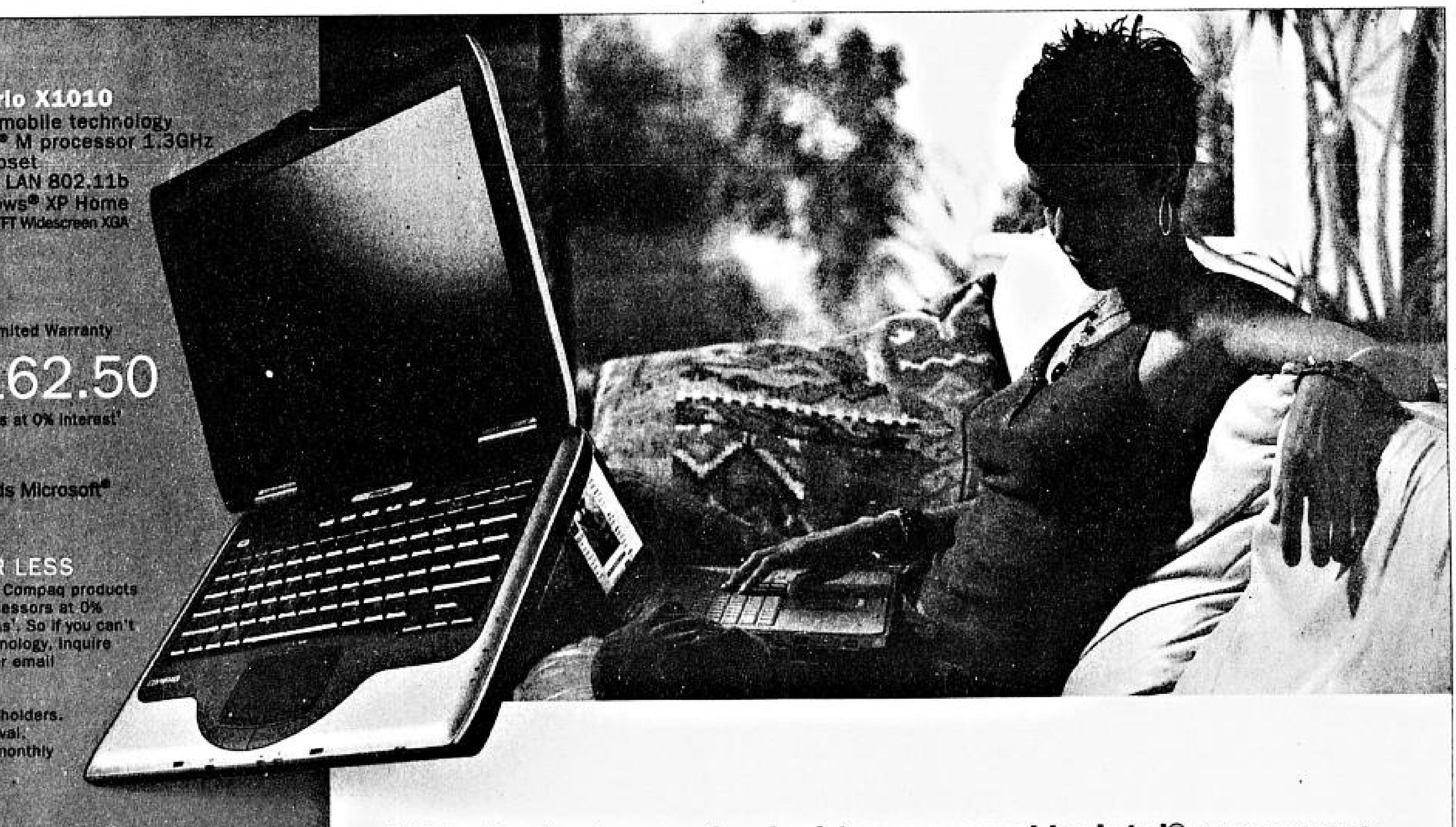

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Transco to sign $68-M loan deal

THE NATIONAL Transmission Corp. (Transco) will sign on Tuesday a $68-million loan agreement with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation for the Leyte-Cebu interconnection up-rating project.

The P3.7-billion project will boost the existing 200-megawatt (MW) link with another circuit, so that an additional 200 MW of electricity could be delivered to the power-hungry Cebu-Negros-Panay (CNP) grid from power-rich Leyte.

Transco president and CEO Alan Ortiz earlier said the project was expected to be completed by June next year, 15 months after the signing of the loan agreement.

In a related development, the JBIC last week approved "in principle" an $80-million loan to Transco to fund the CNP interconnection project.

The tenders for the P4.4-billion project would be released upon receipt of JBIC's formal approval, he said.

Among the entities that had expressed interest in bidding for the CNP project were Kanematsu Corp. and JPower Systems of Japan, Alstom of France and Siemens of Germany, Ortiz said.

Gov't cash position still healthy–Amatong

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT said its cash position was healthy and that it still could afford to reject unreasonably high bids in next week's auction for government securities.

"If the bids are very high, we can reject them," said Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong in a press briefing.

Amatong dispelled speculations that the government was desperate for cash as perceived from the outcome of this week's auctions, where it sold government debt papers at rates higher than expected.

The finance chief said the government had just received the $500 million that was raised through the recent sale of 11-year global bonds, easing the pressure on the government to borrow from the domestic market.

In last Monday's auction, the 91-day T-bill rate rose to 7.616 percent, which was 118.1 basis points higher than the 6.435 percent recorded during the auction on Feb. 16. The 182-day T-bill rate rose by 77.8 basis points to 8.612 percent from 7.834 percent during last month's auction. The government, however, rejected bids for 364-day bills. The increases in rates were blamed on low market liquidity and political uncertainties.

"I'm worried (about the increases in rates), but there is nothing we can do because that's market determined," said Amatong. She added that while the government did not have control over the market's desire to seek higher rates, it could afford to reject high bids to prevent further increases in interest rates.

National Treasurer Mina Figueroa earlier said the government's decision to accept higher rates during the last T-bill auction had nothing to do with its cash position, but was made to set new benchmark rates.

Because of the high rates sought by the banks, the government only partially accepted the bids for the short-term government securities.

The government merely raised P1.83 billion from the auction of the 91-day T-bill, compared with its original offering of P3.5 billion. For the 182-day debt paper, the government accepted only P1.15 billion, as against the scheduled offering of P2.5 billion.

Pagcor starts Internet casinos

THE PHILIPPINE Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) will launch next week the operation of its Internet casinos after it took over this business from a private company.

Pagcor tapped publicly-listed technology firm Philweb Corp. as consultant and service provider for two of its Internet gaming projects.

In a disclosure, Philweb corporate information officer Josephine Manalo said a memorandum of agreement had been forged appointing Philweb as the service provider for Pagcor's Internet sports betting and Internet casinos.

Sources said Pagcor would operate 33 Internet casinos in Metro Manila. It has authorized 1,000 betting stations nationwide.

Pagcor has already launched an Internet sports betting site called BasketballJackpot.Net. Earlier, the Supreme Court declared null and void a franchise for online gambling granted to Sports and Games Entertainment Corp. by Pagcor six years ago. The court said had acted beyond the limits of its authority when it granted the franchise to that firm. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 18, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	13,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.5	18	17.5	18	15,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	45.5	45.5	45	45	30,200
China Banking Corp.	670	670	670	670	9,700
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39	39	38.5	38.5	121,600
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	10,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	93,100
Philippine National Bank	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.5	46,400
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	3,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	3,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.02	135,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	180	180	180	180	10
Manulife Financial Corp.	1935	1940	1935	1940	350
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1420	1460	1420	1460	1,360
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	22.5	23	22.5	23	11,500
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	960,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	845	855	845	855	6,100
Ipeople Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	12,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.037	0.037	1,200,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.72	1.74	1.68	1.68	11,272,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	920	935	920	930	230,710
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	137,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19	19.25	19	19	14,900
Manila Electric Co. B	29.5	30	29.5	29.5	470,700
Petron Corp.	2.95	3	2.85	2.9	1,964,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2	2	2	2	40,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3	3	3	3	109,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Union Cement Corp.	1.4	1.5	1.36	1.5	6,920,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3	3	3	3	70,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	29	29	29	29	3,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17.25	17.25	17	17.25	631,600
Swift Food Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	57	56.5	57	152,700
San Miguel Corp. B	70.5	71	70	70.5	147,900
Universal Robina Corp.	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.4	330,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	50,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
Ayala Corp.	6	6.2	6	6.1	5,543,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.95	2.95	2.9	2.9	19,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	1,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1	1	1	1	60,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	7,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.5	1.5	77,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.51	0.53	0.51	0.51	10,720,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	200,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	40,000
DMCI Holdings Inc. - Pref.	775	775	775	775	7,200
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	22	22.25	21.25	21.25	591,700
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	237,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	800,000
Medco Holdings	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	5,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	620,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	5,300,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14	14	14	14	7,900
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Jardine Davies Inc.	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	6,300
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	8,504,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.5	220,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.2	370,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	30,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	22	23.25	22	23	837,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series I	10	10	10	10	2,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	1,900
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	29,283,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	700,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	250,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.02	1.02	1	1	6,230,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.165	0.17	0.165	0.165	15,220,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	100,000
SM Development Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	100,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	1,820,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	370,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.24	920,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	7,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	10,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	20,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	1,000,000

Stocks end 1.15% up

From page B1

percent or P20 to P930.

It was the most active stock and accounted for 35 percent of total trade of P619.15 million, up from Wednesday's turnover of P527.49 million.

Ayala Land leapt 3.8 percent or 20 centavos to P5.50.

The main index rose 1.15 percent or 16.42 points to 1,448.06 points. The market is up 0.39 percent so far this year.

Gainers beat losers 29 to eight and there 42 stocks unchanged.

Analysts said most players were awaiting 2003 results of big companies like Manila Electric Company (Meralco) and Petron for market leads. *Reuters*

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Region VII, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority in Region VII, with its official address at Banilad, Cebu City, is inviting all interested vessel or barge owners/operators to apply for eligibility and to bid under the Letter Agreement for Vessel/Barge Hire for the shipment of rice as indicated below:

VOLUME SCHEDULED FOR SEA DISPERSAL

Source	Destination		Quantity (bag)	Freight Rate (P/bag)	Aproved Budget for the Contract	Type of Carrier/ Max. Cap. (bags)
	Province	Port				
CEBU CITY	Cebu Islands - Bantayan Is.	Sante Fe	77,000	17.00	1,309,000.00	Vessel - 10,000
	- Camotes Is.	Poro	21,000	14.90	312,900.00	Vessel - 7,000
		Tudela	11,000	15.40	169,400.00	Barge - 4,000
CEBU	Bohol	Tagbilaran	88,000	18.30	1,610,400.00	Vessel - no limit
		Ubay	12,000	15.40	184,800.00	Barge - 4,000
	Negros Or.	Dumaguete	100,000	17.00	1,700,000.00	Vessel - no limit
	Siquijor	Larena	15,000	17.00	255,000.00	Vessel - no limit
CEBU	N. Leyte	Tacloban	167,000	21.80	3,640,600.00	Vessel - no limit
		Ormoc	13,000	18.50	240,500.00	Vessel - no limit
	S. Leyte	Maasin	47,000	18.50	869,500.00	Vessel - 10,000
		Baybay	13,000	17.50	227,500.00	Vessel - 16,000
	Biliran	Naval	40,000	19.80	792,000.00	Vessel - 10,000
	E. Samar	Borongan	80,000	28.00	2,240,000.00	Vessel - 18,000
		Guiuan	20,000	23.50	470,000.00	Vessel - 13,000
	N. Samar	San Jose	95,000	22.20	2,109,000.00	Vessel - no limit
	W. Samar	Catbalogan	100,000	19.80	1,980,000.00	Vessel - no limit
		Calbayog	25,000	19.80	495,000.00	Vessel - no limit
CEBU	Maguindanao	Cotabato	67,000	25.50	1,708,500.00	Vessel - no limit

Summary of Bidding Procedures

The Bidding shall be governed by RA 9184. A single stage Two Envelope System of evaluation will be adopted. Envelope A shall contain the eligibility requirements as specified in the Instruction to Bidders which will be evaluated in a non-discretionary "Pass" or "Fail" criteria. Only those who complied with all the requirements shall be declared "Eligible" and shall proceed to the next phase which is the opening of Envelope B. Envelope B shall contain the accomplished and signed Bid Form.

Bids will be ranked from lowest to highest to determine the Lowest Calculated Bid. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid shall undergo post qualification by the Regional Bids and Awards Committee (RBAC) to verify, validate and ascertain statements made and documents submitted in the eligibility requirements. After which, the bidder shall be declared "Lowest Calculated Responsive Bid" and shall be recommended for awarding of the contract.

Schedule of Activities as follows:

Activity	Date/s	Time
Issuance of Bidding Documents	March 15-24, 2004	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Pre-Bidding Conference	March 31, 2004	9:00 AM
Submission & Opening of Bids	April 13, 2004	9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Interested bidders may secure the bidding documents from the RBAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, NFA, Region VII, Cebu City after payment of a non-transferable, non-refundable application fee of P2,000.00. Bidders or their authorized representatives are required to be present during the opening of sealed bids. For further inquiries, you may call the undersigned in the following numbers: (032) 232-1939 and (032) 232-6832.

The NFA reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any informality or defect found therein, and may accept bids which are deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO J. ADORABLE**
Assistant Regional Director / RBAC Chairman

(PDI - March 13 & 19, 2004)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION

Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

NPC-MMSD 2004-006

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)-MMSD of NPC invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following requirements:

Schedule	Date/Time & Place of Bidding	Item Description	PR No./Inquiry No.	ABC
I	April 5, 2004 2.00 p.m. Kañao Room	Mechanical Parts for Romblon DPP	PB040405-MMAD0658	P 1,885,799.00
II		Mechanical Parts for Tablas DPP, Camotes Bantayan "MAN"	PB030725-MMMT8742 (PB2)	14,411,747.00
III	April 7, 2004 10.00 a.m. Kañao Room	Hauling Services & Rental of Storage Tanks Including Depot Pumping Facilities	PB040407-MMSB0659	8,520,000.00
IV		Supply of Labor & Materials for Fuel Services to SPUG-Eastern Visayas Plants	PB031211-MMMT9965 (PB2)	1,966,960.00

NOTE: A Pre-bidding Conference will be held for the following bidding schedules:

Schedule	Date	Time	Place
Schedule I-II	March 24, 2004	2.00 p.m.	Kañao Function Room
Schedule III-IV	March 24, 2004	3.00 p.m.	Kañao Function Room

Complete sets of Application form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the Materials Management Services Division, Materials Management Dept., of NPC, Diliman, Quezon City with Tel. No 9245357/9245477 upon payment of non-refundable fee of PHP500.00 per schedule starting on **March 12, 2004.** No bid documents will be issued 3 days before the date of bidding

Bids will be received at the assigned Bidding Room, MMSD, MMD, NPC, Diliman, Quezon City on the date and time specified above after which Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders. Certificate of Registration issued by PSD will be honored provided that the Certification is still valid

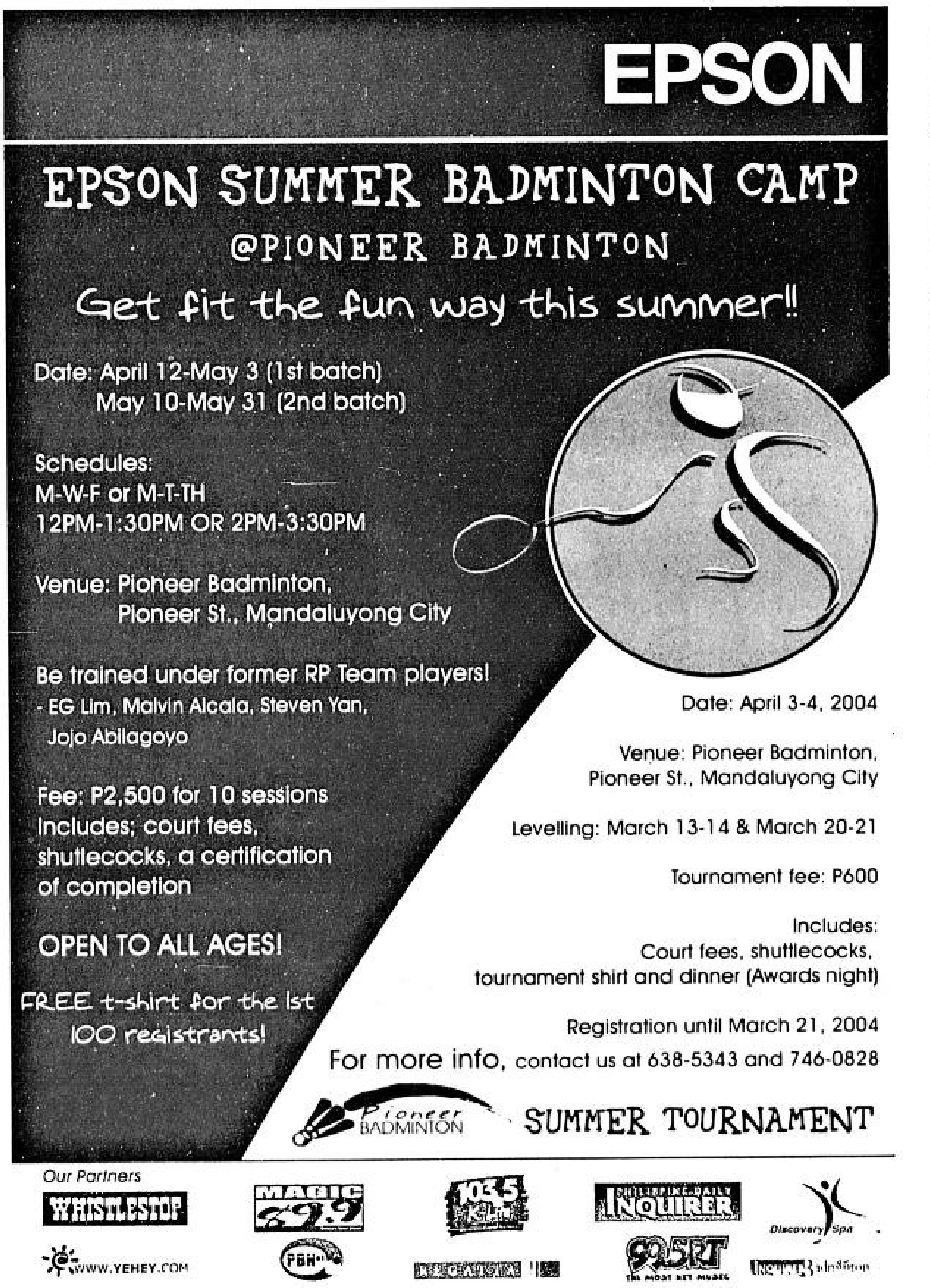
Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/executive in accordance with the IRR of Repubic Act No. 9184

The Bidder shall furnish as part of his/her bid, a bid security in the amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid in the form of Cash, Manager's/Cashier's Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit - One Percent (1%), Bank Guarantee - One and a half percent (1.5%), Surety Bond - Two and a half percent (2.5%), penal and callable on demand issued by a Surety or Insurance Company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commission

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids, and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action

(Sgd.) **LORENZO S. MARCELO**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
MMSD NPC

(PDI - March 12 & 19, 2004)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Schedules:
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12PM-1:30PM OR 2PM-3:30PM

Venue: Pioneer Badminton,
Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City

Be trained under former RP Team players!
- EG Lim, Malvin Alcala, Steven Yan,
Jojo Abilagoyo

Fee: P2,500 for 10 sessions
Includes; court fees,
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of completion

OPEN TO ALL AGES!

FREE t-shirt for the 1st
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Date: April 3-4, 2004

Venue: Pioneer Badminton,
Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City

Levelling: March 13-14 & March 20-21

Tournament fee: P600

Includes:
Court fees, shuttlecocks,
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Registration until March 21, 2004

For more info, contact us at 638-5343 and 746-0828

Pioneer BADMINTON
SUMMER TOURNAMENT

Our Partners

Computer firm helps teachers teach better

By Corrie Salientes-Narisma

EDUCATORS from the South push for higher learning

MANY students find a classroom setting pretty boring and many of them absorb very little from what the teachers are trying to teach.

If this happens to be true to the majority of a class, chances are it is the teacher who is at fault. This may not be because the teacher knows little about his or her subject, but most likely because his or her way of teaching is uninspiring.

Catching the entire class' interest in the subject and keeping it for the school year is, therefore, far from an easy task. But this should be addressed, particularly in public schools where classes are too big to handle. Or else, the students will not learn anything.

Technology and computers can play a major role in achieving this end. But as Intel Corp. president and CEO Craig Barrett said in a statement, "education technology in classrooms is worth nothing if the teachers do not know how to use them effectively. Computers aren't magic, teachers are."

Recognizing the importance of the teacher's role in shaping the future drivers of the economy, Intel Corp. embarked on Intel Teach to the Future, a teaching-the-teachers and would-be-teachers type of undertaking that forms part of the company's worldwide core program called Intel Innovation in Education.

Teaching strategies

Intel Teach to the Future consists of two components—the in-service program for practicing teachers called the train-the-trainers program and the pre-service program, which is designed to cater to professors of college students taking up education. The schools themselves select the participants to both programs.

Yvonne Garcia-Flores, education manager of Intel Corp. Philippines, says Intel Teach to the Future is neither a computer literacy program nor a marketing gimmick.

"We zero in on effective teaching strategies in the classrooms, and technologies are but a tool that forms part of the strategy," says Flores.

Technology, according to the company, opens the doors for teachers and their students to do things they didn't even know were possible. Good teaching, supported by the effective use of technology, can help students enhance their potentials, it added.

CORPORATE CITIZEN

Flores explains that the program is content-oriented but it does not intend to change the regular school curricula. It seeks the best ways of presenting the lessons in any subject—from Music to Math and Science—to catch and sustain the students' attention and interest through the best teaching methods.

"It can be a multi-media approach and it can be done through integrating technology in teaching and learning. We make use of visuals and actual examples to generate and sustain the students' interest," says Flores.

The program aims to encourage the teachers to push for higher learning and higher-order thinking. They are advised and encouraged to devise ways of managing the classrooms so that teaching will become more effective and students will absorb more.

Program focus

Intel Teach to the Future is now on its third year in the Philippines. Some 55,000 teachers, mostly from public schools, have undergone in-service training and around 6,000 to 7,000 college students have trained for free under the pre-service program.

The in-service program supplements the Department of Trade and Industry's PCs for Public Schools Program, which makes available personal computers to public schools through a grant from the Japanese government.

The DTI program had already distributed 20,000 PCs to 1,000 schools under the first phase of the program and it aims to cover another 1,000 schools in the second phase.

The training-the-trainers program covers public high school teachers mainly because they are the main focus of the DTI program. It is presently prioritizing schools in suburban areas that are accessible to telephone lines and the Internet.

"In the Philippines, the conditions to participants are the availability of PCs in schools and access to the Internet. That is why our focus, for the time being, are the schools in suburban areas but we intend to reach out to remote areas in the future," Flores says.

Schools tapped by the DTI for its PCs for Public Schools, chosen with the help of the Department of Education, automatically qualifies for the Intel in-service training.

Training the trainers

Every year, Intel holds two 15-to 20-day or 60-hour training sessions for about 15 to 20 master trainers, composed of selected teachers from participating schools.

Graduates of the training program become the master trainers who will, in turn, train the teachers in their respective schools.

The trainers in this program come from the UP National Institute for Science and Mathematics Educational Development, while the content is formulated with the help of the Department of Science and Technology and the DepEd.

Trainings are held in different regions, mainly in regional science teaching centers or any cooperating university.

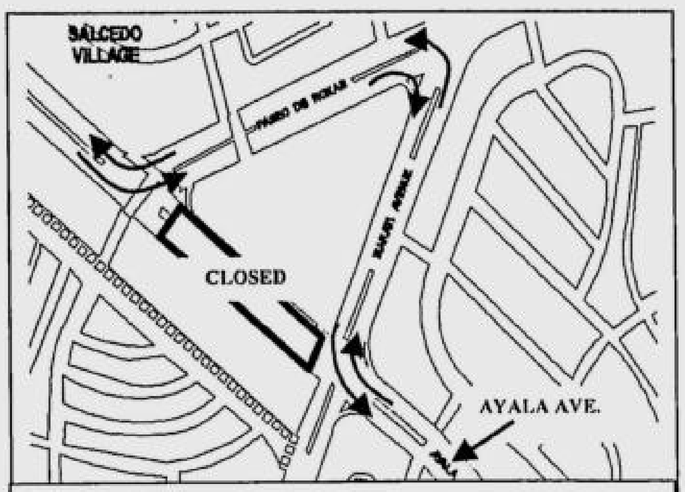
During the training program, participants not only listen to and learn from their trainers. A lot of time is spent on group interactions and hands-on applications, which are deemed more helpful in attaining the objectives of the exercise.

The session goes with practical, hands-on training on the methods of using technology to make teaching more dynamic and interesting; a whole portfolio of unit plan itemizing lessons and determining the scope; resource CD-ROM that includes links to audio and video clips, and assessment tools that can be used in determining the effectiveness of the teaching methods. Learning materials are given for free.

After the 15- to- 20-day training, the teachers will return to their schools with their respective modules or comprehensive unit plans that they can use the same day. These unit plans will serve as templates for future learning modules. Graduates of this program are required to train 20 other teachers in their respective schools.

In the 80 hours of instruction and hands-on application, teachers will learn how to ask essential questions that promote inquiry

COMPUTER/ B8



TRAFFIC RE-ROUTING ADVISORY

Both sides of Ayala Avenue between Makati Avenue and Paseo de Roxas will be closed to all vehicular traffic from 6 P.M. to 10 P.M on March 23, 2004 to give way to the 170th anniversary celebration of Ayala Corporation. Vehicular traffic will be re-routed as follows:

1. Public Utility Vehicles (PUVs) coming from EDSA going toward Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue (Buendia) will turn right at Makati Avenue, turn left at Paseo de Roxas and turn right to Ayala Avenue.
2. All other vehicles may turn left at Makati Avenue going toward Pasay Road or turn right going toward Paseo de Roxas.
3. PUVs coming from Buendia going toward EDSA will turn left at Paseo de Roxas, turn right at Makati Avenue and turn left at Ayala Avenue.
4. All other vehicles from Buendia may turn right at Paseo de Roxas going toward Pasay Road or turn left going toward Makati Avenue.

Please note that signboards with this same information are also posted along Ayala Avenue.

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Napocor plants up for sale

By Michelle V. Remo

THE POWER Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) has approved the privatization of four generating companies of the state-run National Power Corp.

The proceeds of the sale would be used to trim Napocor's burgeoning debt.

"Once we sell them (gencos), the move will help meet the cash requirement of Napocor," said Finance Secretary and PSALM Chair Juanita Amatong in a press briefing.

The four firms up for sale are the 22-megawatt Bohol power plant, the 1.2-MW Loboc Hydroelectric plant, the 2-MW Barit plant and the 0.4-MW Cawayan plant.

The PSALM board formally agreed to privatize the generating companies during its meeting held Wednesday at the finance department.

The government hopes to sell the Napocor gencos before the May general elections.

The government is finding ways to help ease Napocor's financial woes because the national government will shoulder its loan defaults, as it issued sovereign guarantees.

The sale of the four gencos will help Napocor trim its billions of pesos in debt.

The government expects to raise some P136.5 billion from the sale of all of Napocor's generation assets.

The privatization of Napocor's power generating assets is mandated by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, which is aimed at restructuring the country's power industry.

The government initially wanted to sell the generation assets only after the transmission assets are privatized.

But after encountering difficulties selling transcos, however, the government decided to privatize gencos even before transco privatization is completed.

Meralco returned to profit in '03 due to rate increase

By Abigail L. Ho

THE MANILA Electric Co. estimated that it bounced back to profitability in 2003 after suffering a P2.01-billion net loss in 2002.

Meralco president Jesus Francisco said the rate hike granted by the Energy Regulatory Commission last year was the company's main profit driver.

"The profit will come from the full effect of the unbundling increase, which took effect in June. Seven months of that could result in a net income," he told reporters Wednesday evening.

The ERC in a May 30 order approved a rate hike of 17 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for the power distributor: 8.35 centavos for generation and transmission and 8.65 centavos for distribution.

This increase took effect during Meralco's June billing cycle.

Francisco said Meralco also expected a 4.5-percent increase in power sales last year, slightly better than the 4.2-percent target.

To further improve its service, he said Meralco had earmarked a capital investment of P5.75 billion for projects to be undertaken this year.

This year's capex allocation would have been higher if an ERC-approved 12-centavo rate hike was implemented, he said.

The ERC issued a provisional authority for Meralco to collect an additional 12 centavos per kWh from the four million within its franchise area.

But the Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order on the rate hike.

"Our capex for 2004 had always been between P5.5 billion and P5.75 billion. We adjusted it upwards after we thought we received the 12-centavo increase. So when the 12-centavo increase was rolled back, we felt that we had to go back to the original budget as we wouldn't be able to support the higher budget," he said.

Francisco said some of the 42 projects that Meralco decided to shelve because of budgetary constraints, mainly attributed to its P30-billion refund of overcharges from 1994 to 2003, could still be undertaken this year.

JG Summit to raise ₱800M

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

JG Summit Holdings Inc., the flagship company of the Gokongwei group, aims to raise P800 million from the sale of preferred shares.

The proceeds would be used to fund the group's working capital requirements.

JS Summit chairman James Go said yesterday that the final price has yet to be set but the conglomerate is looking at selling the 800 million preferred shares at P1 par value.

Investor relations director and corporate planning chief BJ Sebastian said it was unlikely that part of the proceeds would be used to retire the company's dollar-denominated debt.

JG Summit's debt stands at over $1 billion.

JG Summit reduced its debt by $400 million to $500 million since December using internally generated cash.

The company set aside P20 billion for capital expenses this year, of which P14 billion to P15 billion would come from operations.

The bulk of the budget will go to the expansion of its telecommunications business.

Computer . . .

From page B7

and encourage research; use computers and the Internet as research and communication tools; incorporate use of Internet, Web page design and multimedia software into unit plans; help students communicate their learning in creative ways, and create tools to assess students' works.

Would-be teachers

The pre-service component of the Intel Teach to the Future was designed for college students taking up education but the training itself is participated in by their professors, who are selected by school officials.

"The idea here is to prepare tomorrow's teachers to use technology in their classrooms," Flores said.

Through a 10-day curriculum review training, participating professors receive detailed hands-on instruction materials and modular curriculum that is easy to integrate into existing college courses.

College and university professors attend a 10-day curriculum review training using Intel Teach to the Future materials. They then integrate the curriculum into existing courses in a way that best serves their students.

The participating professors, for their part, are expected to prepare would-be teachers in formulating technology-rich units with authentic assessments that meet divisional/regional and national standards; developing curriculum framing and creating electronic portfolio management systems.

Enhancement training and once-a-year forum for previous participants, and on-the-spot checking of participating schools are being undertaken by the company to ensure the actual application and effectiveness of the modules and strategies formulated under the Intel Teach to the Future training programs.

Globalization . . .

From page B5

does not have to wait for the legal case to be settled in court. It can resolve this more effectively by changing its policy and implement the right form of trade liberalization.

The wrong kind of liberalization is not limited to the tuna industry alone. Wherever this occurs, job security is severely threatened and, as predicted by Stiglitz, violence is on the increase. We should reformulate our trade liberalization policy in the tuna industry and in any area where there is no fair trade. In those areas, we should immediately heed the advice of Stiglitz lest we reap the whirlwind of violence: "the path to economic globalization must be changed."

(The author is chair of Agriwatch, a private sector initiative; former undersecretary of Agriculture and Trade and Industry and former chair and Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects. For inquiries or suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02 8510635.)

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High oil prices threaten US economy, analysts say

NEW YORK—Rising crude oil prices are undermining the positive effect of a weaker dollar on the huge United States trade deficit.

The world economy is also in flux due to rising oil demand from Asia, and Opec moves to boost prices.

When the dollar loses value, US exports are more competitive on world markets. But while trade data suggest US exports may be benefiting from a weaker dollar, the rising price of oil is offsetting those benefits.

The latest US trade data are based on oil-import prices of less than $30 a barrel. With oil flirting with the $40 threshold, analysts say the negative effect of high energy prices on the trade has only just begun.

Economists are not yet saying the US economy is suffering from the higher oil prices. But there is increasing agreement that strong Asian demand—mostly from China, as well as India—is putting upward pressure on prices.

Chinese and Japanese currency market policies have kept the yuan and the yen weak against the dollar. That, in turn has limited the growth of US exports to Asia.

"Oil prices have jumped substantially, and that obviously raises the cost of imports, which offsets the gains from increased US exports in manufacturing," said Philip Verleger, a veteran oil industry analyst.

Oil prices in New York have risen around 15 percent in two months to pre-Iraq war highs at $38 a barrel, partly fueled by output cuts as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries prepares for weaker global demand with the end of the northern hemisphere winter.

The surge in prices led the United States to spend an extra $200 million on oil in January versus December, even though it imported 8 million fewer barrels, according to the US Commerce Department.

In January, the US trade deficit widened to a record $43.1 billion. Economists say the surge in oil prices was the spoiler.

No one is saying the United States, the world's largest oil-consuming nation, is close to any supply shortage.

But with China's surging thirst for fuel—it passed Japan as the world's No. 2 oil consumer late last year—competition for petroleum is heating up, as reflected in the higher prices. *Reuters*

Opec exec worried over high oil prices

JAKARTA—The president of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries on Thursday said the cartel, which controls half the world's crude exports, is concerned about high oil prices.

"The current oil price will not be a benefit to the world," Purnomo Yusgiantoro told reporters in Jakarta. "We are concerned about that."

When asked if Opec would still go ahead with plans to cut official production to 23.5 million barrels per day, from 24.5 million bpd from April 1, Yusgiantoro replied: "That is already policy."

Opec members Venezuela and Nigeria in recent weeks have called for Opec to raise its $22-$28 per barrel reference price band, used to help determine production policy.

But Purnomo said no concrete proposal for change had been made to the 11-member cartel.

Benchmark light crude prices in the United States reached a 13-month high on Wednesday of $38.35 a barrel, before ending at a 13-year closing high of $38.18.

In South Korea, the country's third biggest oil refiner, S-Oil Corp., has plans to export 120,000 tons of spot gas oil in April, steady from March, a company source said on Thursday.

"Domestic demand is the same," said the official of S-Oil Corp. "That's why the company is keeping spot gas oil exports steady."

April spot gas oil is being offered by South Korean refineries at 30 cents a barrel, below Singapore quotes on a free-on-board basis, he said. *Reuters*

A QUOTATION board flashes the current rate of the Japanese yen against the US dollar at a foreign exchange brokerage in Tokyo. The yen jumped against the dollar on Thursday. Analysts have noted that Japanese monetary authorities are not so resolute to halt a rise in the yen. AFP

Yen still rising; Asia stock indices mixed

SINGAPORE—The yen on Thursday hit fresh multi-week highs versus the dollar and euro on firm Japanese shares and reports Tokyo may end aggressive intervention.

Oil hovered near 13-year highs as a drop in already low gasoline stocks deepened fears of a supply crunch. Gold was steady above $406 an ounce on global security fears and the weak dollar.

European shares were expected to open steady, with financial bookmakers predicting London to rise six points, and Paris and Germany's DAX to climb about two points.

Asian stock indices were mixed, with Japanese shares ending up 0.4 percent at 11,484.28, after hitting a 21-month high earlier in the day as economic optimism buoyed stocks dependent on domestic demand, including banks and insurers.

The yen's more than one percent rise against the dollar erased gains by exporters such as Toyota Motor Co.

"The yen's sudden advance (against the dollar) came as a surprise to the market and sapped some buyers' interest in exporters," said Kenichi Azuma, a strategist at Cosmo Securities. "This kind of volatility and uncertainty is really hated in the market."

MSCI's broadest index of Asia Pacific shares ex-Japan rose 0.7 percent, lifted by a 3.2 percent jump in Taiwan shares ahead of a presidential poll on Saturday.

Hong Kong shares were down one percent, while the H-share index of Chinese firms listed in the city had fallen almost two percent.

The spotlight was on China's largest chip maker, SMIC, which fell seven percent on its Hong Kong debut after its US stock fell 11.4 percent on its debut on Wednesday.

The poor performance dampened prospects for Chinese companies that hope to raise about $23 billion in overseas IPOs this year. SMIC was the world's third-largest IPO this year.

The dollar fell more than one percent from late US levels to 106.90 yen, a level not seen since Feb. 20, before edging up to around $107.05. *Reuters*

ADB to China, Malaysia: Get out of fixed-rate system fast

CHINA and Malaysia, their exchange rates pegged to the sliding dollar, should let their currencies rise as soon as possible to avoid destabilizing their economies, an Asian Development Bank official said on Thursday.

Ifzal Ali, the bank's chief economist, said speculation in regional markets was also increasing.

Ifzal noted that surplus money is being flushed in Asia's banking system as investors bet China would be forced into an early revaluation of the yuan.

"I don't think any government in the world has the power to try and go against market forces for any period of time," he told Reuters in a telephone interview. "The sooner you get out of a fixed-rate exchange, the better."

Ifzal's views contrast with those of officials in both countries. Chinese and Malaysian authorities have said there is no urgent need to revalue their currencies.

Both countries have so far resisted changing pegs that have helped their exporters sell more goods and services abroad, and boosted their stock and debt markets.

Ifzal said the time had come for a "change in mindset," and developing Asian nations should not fear a stronger currency would erode their exports' competitiveness.

"You see this happening in Japan all the time," he said. "The yen has been strengthening for decades but it hasn't stopped Japan from ratcheting up their productivity and competitiveness."

He warned inflation would creep up and easy credit could spark another rash of non-performing loans reminiscent of the mountain of bad debt that crippled some regional economies during the 1997-98 Asian crisis.

"Huge inflows of liquidity are entering the system," Ifzal said. "These sort of speculative flows can be very destabilizing. Inflation in Asia is still low, but money supply in some of the countries has gone up exponentially."

To maintain their exchange rates, the Malaysian and Chinese central banks bought foreign currency with their own, boosting the amount of available cash and pumping up their economies. *Reuters*

US to unveil first WTO complaint against China

SHANGHAI—The United States will unveil this week the first WTO complaint against China, accusing it of impeding US chip imports, according to a US senator on Thursday.

The complaint, the latest in a spate of disputes during an election year, would be the first to be brought to the World Trade Organization against China.

American traders have been railing against low-cost China's $125-billion trade surplus with the United States.

"My understanding is that the administration will announce this week that it is filing a WTO case on this issue," said Max Baucus, the senior Democrat in the US Senate overseeing trade matters.

Baucus told reporters in Shanghai that the exchange rate of the Chinese yuan should be more freely traded.

US businessmen are claiming that Chinese manufacturers have an unfair trade advantage which has resulted in the loss of millions of US jobs.

Washington says tax breaks enjoyed by chip firms based in China have been aiding local players such as Shanghai foundry Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp., which debuted in New York and Hong Kong on Wednesday and Thursday.

"In my view, the practice of rebating the VAT only for domestically produced semiconductors clearly violates WTO rules," said Baucus, who is leading a trade delegation from his native state of Montana to China's richest city.

"At the end of the day, the United States will—and should—take whatever measures necessary to stop this discriminatory practice," he added.

US chip firms complain that China's practice of rebating more than 80 percent of the VAT tax to domestic chip firms—but not foreign suppliers—puts them at a disadvantage.

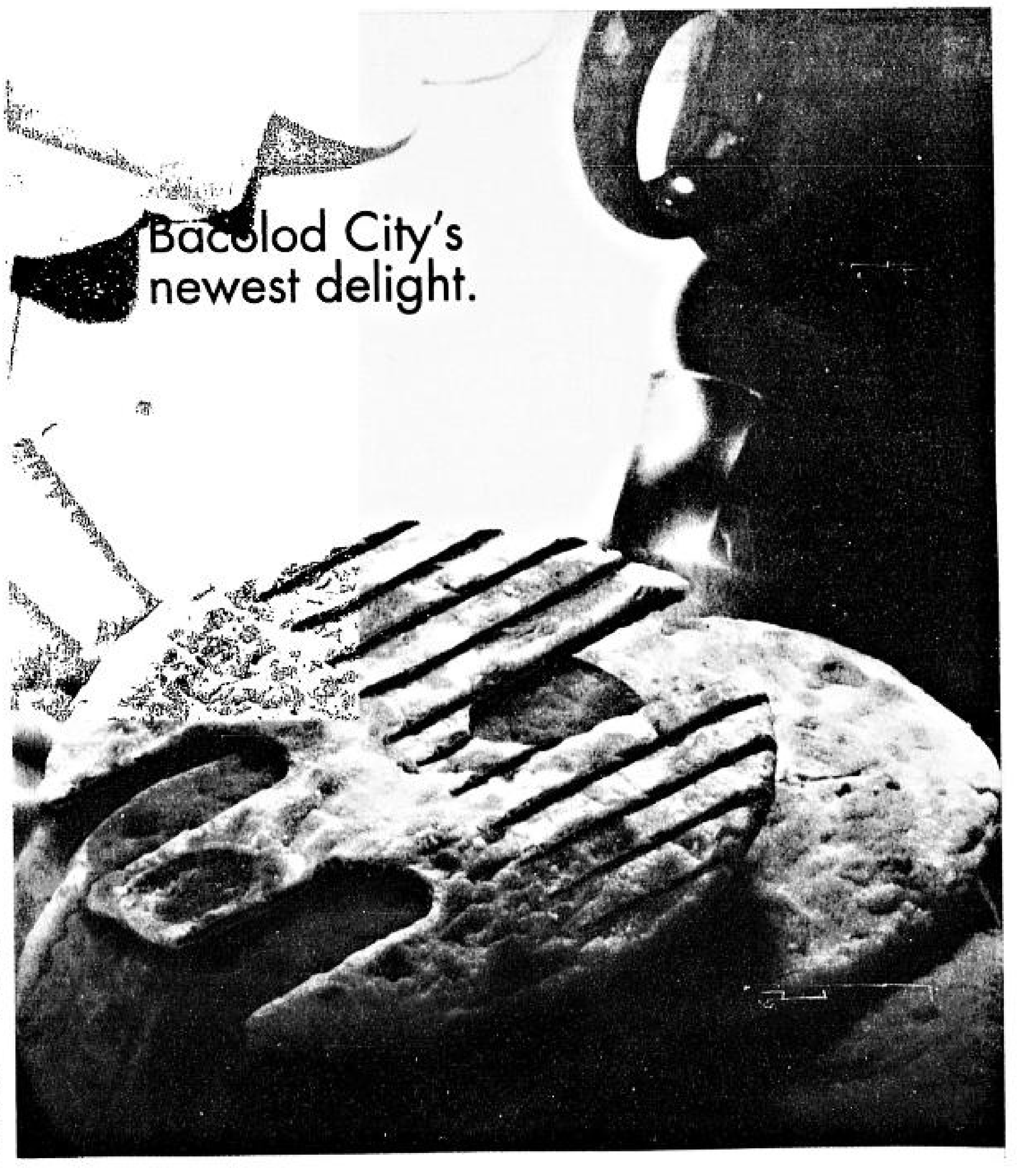
The Semiconductor Industry Association, which groups the likes of Intel and IBM, says "a fraction of a percent can make the difference in winning or losing a sale."

But foreign companies could qualify for similar rebates as long as they show domestic research or design capability, industry executives say.

"Each side has its arguments," the senator said. "But it's up to the WTO to make their decision."

US labor groups have also been urging the Bush administration to look into the suppression of workers' rights in China, with a view to putting duties on some products.

"It sounds like, on its face, there's something to it," Baucus said in reference to the complaint. *Reuters*



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GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BOARDS OF ELECTION INSPECTORS ON THE CASTING AND COUNTING OF VOTES IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 10, 2004 NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS.
x-----------------x

ABALOS, BENJAMIN S.	CHAIRMAN
JAVIER, RUFINO S.B.	COMMISSIONER
SADAIN, MEHOL K.	COMMISSIONER
BORRA, RESURRECCION Z.	COMMISSIONER
TUASON, FLORENTINO A. JR.	COMMISSIONER
GARCILLANO, VIRGILIO O.	COMMISSIONER
BARCELONA, MANUEL A. JR.	COMMISSIONER

Promulgated: 15 March 2004

RESOLUTION NO. 6667

The Commission on Elections, pursuant to the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code (BP Blg. 881), Republic Acts No. 6646, 7166, 7904, 7941, 8189 and other election laws, **RESOLVED** to promulgate, as it hereby **RESOLVES** to promulgate, the following General Instructions for the Boards of Election Inspectors on the Casting and Counting of Votes in connection with the May 10, 2004 national and local elections:

Article I
BOARD OF ELECTION INSPECTORS

SECTION 1. ***Board of Election Inspectors; constitution and appointment.*** — The Commission, through its election officer, shall constitute for each precinct or cluster of precincts a Board of Election Inspectors, hereinafter referred to as the BEI, and appoint its members in writing in the form prescribed by the Commission (CE Form No. 5) not later than March 16, 2004. The BEI shall be composed of a chairman and two members, all of whom shall be public school teachers, giving preference to those with permanent appointments. One of the members shall be designated as poll clerk.

Sec. 2. ***Qualifications of members of the BEI.*** — No public school teacher shall be appointed as chairman or member of the BEI, whether regular, substitute or temporary, unless he:

(a) Is of good moral character and irreproachable reputation;
(b) Is a registered voter of the city or municipality;
(c) Has never been convicted of any election offense or of any other crime punishable by more than six (6) months of imprisonment, or has no pending case filed against him for any election offense; and
(d) Is able to speak and write English or the local dialect.

In case there are not enough qualified public school teachers, teachers in private schools, employees in the civil service, or citizens of known probity and competence, who are registered voters of the city or municipality, may be appointed as members of the BEI, provided that the chairman shall be a public school teacher.

Any person, who being ineligible for appointment as member of the BEI who accepts an appointment to said Board, assumes office, and actually serves as members thereof, or any public officer or any person acting in his behalf who appoints such ineligible person knowing him to be ineligible, shall be guilty of an election offense.

Sec. 3. ***Oath of members of the BEI.*** — Before assuming office, the chairman and members of the BEI shall take and sign an oath in the form prescribed by the Commission (CE Form No. 5-A) before the election officer. Copies of the oath shall be retained by the election officer.

Sec. 4. ***Disqualification.*** — No person shall serve as chairman or member of the BEI if he or his spouse is related within the fourth civil degree of consanguinity or affinity to any member of the same BEI, or to any candidate to be voted for or his spouse.

Sec. 5. ***Notice of disqualification.*** — Any member who is disqualified for any reason shall notify the election officer in writing who shall, in turn, immediately appoint a replacement.

Sec. 6. ***Temporary vacancies in the BEI.*** — If, at the time of the meeting of the BEI, any member is absent or the office is still vacant, the members present shall call upon the substitute of the absent member from the roll of substitutes listed by the Department of Education (DepEd) to perform the duties of the absent member. In case of non-availability of a substitute, the members present shall appoint any non-partisan registered voter of the precinct not otherwise disqualified to temporarily fill said vacancy until the absent member appears or the vacancy is filled. In case there are two members present, they shall act jointly.

Sec. 7. ***Arrest of absent members.*** — The member or members of the BEI present may order the arrest of any member who, in his or their judgment, has absented himself with the intention of obstructing the performance of the duties of the BEI.

Sec. 8. ***Powers and functions of the BEI.*** — The BEI shall have the following powers and functions:

(a) Conduct the voting and counting of votes in their respective polling places;
(b) Act as deputies of the Commission in the supervision and control of the election in the polling place wherein they are assigned;
(c) Maintain order within the polling place and its premises, keep access thereto open and unobstructed, and enforce obedience to its lawful orders. If any person refuses to obey the lawful orders of the BEI or conducts himself in a disorderly manner in its presence or within its hearing and thereby interrupts or disturbs its proceedings, the BEI may issue an order in writing directing any peace officer to take such person into custody until the adjournment of the meeting, but such order shall not be executed as to prevent such person from voting; and
(d) Perform such other functions prescribed under the Omnibus Elections Code or by the rules and regulations promulgated by the Commission.

Sec. 9. ***Proceedings of the BEI.*** — The meeting of the BEI shall be public and held in the polling place designated by the Commission.

The BEI shall act through its chairman and shall decide, without delay, by majority vote all questions which may arise in the performance of its duties.

Sec. 10. ***Prohibition against political activity.*** — No member of the BEI shall engage in any partisan political activity or take part in the election except to discharge his duties and to vote.

Sec. 11. ***Per diem of the BEI.*** — The chairman and members of the BEI, the provincial, city and municipal treasurers, and the administrators and supervisors of the DepEd assigned by the Commission to perform election duties shall each receive a *per diem* of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000) for each day of service, provided that in *no* case shall payment of *per diem* for services rendered exceed Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000). Support personnel from the DepEd who may be required by the Commission to perform election duties shall each be entitled to a *per diem* of Five Hundred Pesos (P500).

Article II
WATCHERS

Sec. 12. ***Official watchers of candidates, political parties and other groups.*** — Each candidate and political party or coalition of political parties duly registered with the Commission and fielding candidates in the May 10, 2004 elections including those participating under the party list system of representation may appoint two watchers, to serve alternately, in every polling place. However, candidates for *Sangguniang Panlalawigan, Sangguniang Panlungsod or Sangguniang Bayan*, belonging to the same ticket or slate shall collectively be entitled to one watcher.

Duly accredited citizens' arms of the Commission shall be entitled to appoint a watcher in every polling place. Other civic, religious, professional, business, service, youth, and any other similar organizations, with prior authority of the Commission, shall be entitled collectively to appoint one watcher in every polling place.

If because of limited space, all watchers cannot be accommodated in the polling place, preference shall be given to the watchers of the six (6) accredited major political parties as determined by the Commission and the watcher of the citizens' arm, with the latter being given preferential position closest to the BEI.

Sec. 13. ***Qualifications of watchers.*** — No person shall be appointed watcher unless he is a qualified voter of the city or municipality comprising the precinct where he is assigned, is of good reputation, has not been convicted by final judgment of any election offense or of any other crime, knows how to read and write Pilipino, English or any of the prevailing local dialects, and is not related within the fourth civil degree of consanguinity or affinity to the chairman or any member of the BEI in the polling place where he seeks appointment as watcher.

No appointive or elective *barangay* official shall be appointed as watcher.

Sec. 14. ***Rights and duties of watchers.*** — Upon entering the polling place, the watchers shall deliver to the chairman of the BEI their appointments as watchers and their names shall forthwith be recorded in the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes with a notation under their signatures that they are not disqualified to serve as such. The appointments of the watchers shall bear the personal signature of the candidate or duly authorized representatives of the party, organization or coalition which appointed them. For this purpose, registered parties, organizations or coalitions authorized by the Commission to appoint watchers shall, not later than April 25, 2004, provide the election officer concerned with the names and signatures of their representatives authorized to appoint watchers in the city or municipality.

The watchers shall have the right to:

(a) Witness and inform themselves of the proceedings of the BEI;
(b) Take note of what they may see or hear;
(c) Take photographs of the proceedings and incidents, if any, during the counting of votes, as well as the election returns, tally board and ballot boxes;
(d) File a protest against any irregularity or violation of law which they believe may have been commited by the BEI or any of its members or by any person;
(e) Obtain from the BEI a certificate as to the filing of such protest and/or of the resolution thereon;
(f) Read the ballot after it shall have been read by the chairman, as well as the election returns after it shall have been completed and signed by the members of the BEI, without touching said election documents; and
(g) Be furnished, upon request, with a Certificate of Votes cast for the candidates, duly signed and thumbmarked by the chairman and all members of the BEI.

Watchers shall not speak to any member of the BEI, or to any voter, or among themselves, in such a manner as would disturb the proceedings of the BEI.

The six (6) principal watchers representing the six (6) accredited major political parties in the polling place shall, if available, affix their signatures and thumbmarks in the election returns.

Article III
ELECTION FORMS AND SUPPLIES

Sec. 15. ***Election forms, documents and supplies.*** — Except when authorized to do so earlier by the Commission, the BEI shall get the following forms, documents and supplies early in the morning of election day:

CEF NO.	FORMS AND SUPPLIES	RATE OF DISTRIBUTION	
ELECTION FORMS			
3	Poster Indicating Precinct Number	1	piece
4	Certified List of Candidates for President; Vice-President; Senator; Party-List System of Representation; Member, House of Representatives; Governor; Vice-Governor; Member, Provincial Board; City/Municipal Mayor; City/Municipal Vice-Mayor and City/Municipal Councilor	12	copies
6	Official Ballots	1	pc. per vote + 3 per precinct
9	Election Returns	1	set
10	Tally Board	1	set
11	Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes	1	set of 2 pcs.
12	Paper Seals	25	pieces
13	Certificate of Votes	20	pieces
14	Certificate of Receipt of Official Ballots, Other Forms and Supplies by BEI	3	pieces
27 to 27-D	Official Receipt of Election Returns – copy for the Election Officer – copy for the Board of Canvassers – copy for the Dominant Majority Party – copy for the Dominant Minority Party – copy for the Citizen's Arm	10	pieces
ENVELOPE FOR VOTING AND COUNTING			
15, 16, 16-A, 16-B, 16-C, 16-D and 28	for Counted Official Ballots, Excess, Marked, Spoiled, Torn Half of Unused Official Ballots, Other Half of Torn Unused Official Ballots and Official Ballots	7	pieces
17 to 17-G	for Election Returns – copy for the City/Municipal Board of Canvassers – copy for the Congress – copy for the Commission – copy for Provincial Board of Canvassers – copy for Dominant Majority Party – copy for Dominant Minority Party – copy for Accredited Citizens Arm – copy for Ballot Box	1	set of 8 pcs.
OTHER ENVELOPES			
18 & 18-A	for Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes	1	set of 2 pcs.
19, 19-A & 19-B	for Key of Ballot Box	1	set of 3 pcs.
OTHER FORMS			
30/31	Temporary Appointment of Chairman /Poll Clerk/Member	10	pieces
33/35	Certificate of Challenge or Protest and Decision of the Board	10	pieces
39	Oath of Voter Challenged for Illegal Acts	10	pieces
40	Oath of Identification of Challenged Voter	10	pieces
41	Summons Re Challenged Voter	10	pieces
	Election Watchers ID in Polling Place	2	pieces/cand.
	COMELEC Pass	2	pieces/mun.
	General Instructions for BEI	3	copies
SUPPLIES			
	Ballpen	13	pieces
	Bond Paper Long	30	pieces
	Carbon Paper	5	sheets
	Rubber Band	10	pieces
	Padlocks	3	pieces
	Thumbprint/Fingerprint Takers	2	pieces
	Self-locking Fixed-Length Seals	2	pieces
	Indelible Stain Ink	2	bottles
	Ballot Secrecy Folders	12	pieces
	Ballot Box	1	piece

The BEI shall carefully check the different election forms, documents and supplies and the quantity actually received and deposit them in the ballot box which shall thereafter be locked with three padlocks. The BEI shall sign a Certificate of Receipt (CE Form No. 14) in three copies, one copy of which shall be retained by the BEI. The two other copies shall be delivered to the city/municipal treasurer who shall transmit one copy to the Commission in Manila immediately after election day. Each member of the BEI shall keep in his custody one key corresponding to one of the padlocks.

In case of shortage of non-accountable forms and supplies, the election officer shall secure said forms and supplies from the provincial election supervisor.

Sec. 16. ***Official ballot.*** — a) The official ballot for national and local elections shall be of uniform size and color, printed on security paper with distinctive, clear and legible watermarks or other security marks that will readily distinguish the ballot paper from ordinary paper.

(b) It shall contain a stub and detachable coupon, both of which shall bear the same serial number of the ballot, with space for the thumbmark of the voter on the detachable coupon.
(c) It shall bear the coat-of-arms of the Republic of the Philippines, the words "Official Ballot", the name of the city or the municipality and province in which the election is to be held, the date of the election and the following notice in English: "Fill out this ballot secretly using a ballot secrecy folder. Do not put any distinctive mark on any part of this ballot."
(d) It shall contain the appropriate spaces for the positions of President, Vice-President, Senator, Party-List, Governor, Member of the House of Representatives, Vice-Governor, Provincial Board Member, City/Municipal Mayor, City/Municipal Vice-Mayor and City/Municipal Councilor, which the voter will fill-up by writing the name/s of the candidate/s or party, coalition of political parties or organization participating under the party-list system of representation of his choice.

In cities or municipalities where Arabic is of general use, the title of the offices to be voted for shall be printed in Arabic in addition to and immediately below the English title.

Sec. 17. ***Forms to be prepared when needed.*** — Samples of the following forms are attached hereto to guide the BEI in the replication thereof when the need arises:

(a) Temporary Appointment of Chairman/Poll Clerk/Member (Annex "A")
(b) Certificate of Challenge or Protest and Decision of the BEI (Annex "B")
(c) Oath of Voter Challenged for Illegal Acts (Annex "C")
(d) Oath of Identification of Challenged Voter (Annex "D")
(e) Summons Re Challenged Voter (Annex "E")

Sec. 18. ***Book of voters and computerized voters' list.*** — Each precinct shall have the following voters' registry, all of which shall be duly certified by the Election Registration Board (ERB):

(a) Its Book of Voters;
(b) One (1) copy of the Election Day Computerized Voters' List (EDCVL), also known as CVL Form 2 or List of Voters with Voting Records;
(c) Two (2) copies of the Posted Computerized Voters' List (PCVL), also known as CVL Report 1-B or List of Voters; and
(d) Two (2) copies of the list of deactivated voters.

The chairman of the BEI shall have custody of the Book of Voters.

The poll clerk shall have custody of the ECVL and one (1) copy of the list of deactivated voters.

The third member shall have two (2) copies of the PCVL, one copy of which, together with the list of deactivated voters, shall be posted at the door of the polling place.

Sec. 19. ***Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes.*** — The BEI shall accomplish in two (2) copies the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes (CE Form No. 11) entering therein all data required as they become available and all acts as they occur. Copies of the minutes shall be signed and sealed in separate envelopes (CEF Nos. 18 and 18-A) for distribution as follows:

(a) The *original*, to the election officer who shall in turn transmit the same to the Records and Statistics Division of the Election Records and Statistics Department, COMELEC, Manila; and
(b) The *second copy*, inside the compartment of the ballot box for valid ballots.

Article IV
CASTING OF VOTES

Sec. 20. ***Who are allowed to vote.*** — Registered voters of the precinct whose voter registration records are contained in the Book of Voters, or whose names appear in the EDCVL, and those ordered by the courts to be included in the list of voters shall be allowed to vote.

Members of the BEI and their substitutes may vote in the polling place where they are assigned on election day, provided that:

(a) They are registered voters of the same city or municipality where they are assigned, except in the National Capital Region and in highly urbanized cities where they should be registered voters within the same councilor district where they are assigned; and
(b) Their voting in the polling place where they are not registered should be noted in the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes.

Sec. 21. ***Date of election.*** — The election shall be held on May 10, 2004.

Sec. 22. ***Voting hours.*** — The casting of votes shall start promptly at seven o'clock in the morning and shall end at three o'clock in the afternoon of election day. If at three o'clock there are still voters within thirty meters in front of the polling place who have not yet cast their votes, the voting shall continue to allow said voters to cast their votes without interruption. For this purpose, the poll clerk shall, without delay, list the names of said voters in the prescribed form. The voters listed shall be called to vote by the poll clerk by announcing each name three times in the order in which they are listed. Any voter in the list who is not present when called shall not be permitted to vote at any later time.

Sec. 23. ***Place of voting.*** — The voters shall cast their votes in the polling place designated by the Commission for the precinct. The Poster Indicating the Precinct Number and Location of Polling Place (CE Form No. 3) shall be prominently posted at the door of the polling place.

Sec. 24. ***Preliminaries to the voting.*** — (a) The BEI shall meet at the polling place at six o'clock in the morning of election day, and do the following:

1) See to it that it has all the election forms, documents and supplies needed;
2) Post one copy of the PCVL and the list of deactivated voters at the door of the polling place; and
3) Staple, paste or post the certified list of candidates and registered parties, organizations or coalitions participating under the party list system of representation (CE Form No. 4) inside the ballot secrecy folder;

(b) Before the voting begins, the chairman of the BEI shall:

1) Open the ballot box, empty both of its compartments, exhibit them to all those present and, being empty, lock its interior cover with three (3) padlocks. The members of the BEI shall each retain their respective keys to the padlocks during the voting; and
2) Show to the public and to the watchers present the package of official ballots and the Book of Voters, both duly sealed, and thereafter, break the seals. The number of pads and the serial numbers of the ballots in each pad, and the fact that the package of ballots and the book of voters were shown to the public with the seals intact shall be entered in the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes.

The interior cover of the ballot box shall remain locked until the voting is finished and the counting begins. However, if it should become necessary to make room for more ballots, the chairman, may, in the presence of the members and watchers, open the box and press down with his hands the ballots contained therein without removing any of them, after which the BEI shall again close the interior cover of the ballot box and lock it with padlocks as therein provided.

Sec. 25. ***Rules to be observed during the voting.*** — During the voting, the BEI shall see to it that:

(a) No watcher enters the places reserved for the voters and the BEI, or mingles and talks with the voters;
(b) No voter prepares his ballot without using a ballot secrecy folder or exhibits the contents of the ballot to any person;
(c) No ballot is brought outside the polling place;
(d) No person carrying any firearm or any other deadly weapon enters the polling place except those expressly authorized by the Commission;
(e) The voters vote in the order of their arrival in the polling place; and
(f) There is no crowding of voters and disorderly behavior inside the polling place.

Sec. 26. ***Persons allowed in and around the polling place.*** — Only the following shall be allowed inside the polling place:

(a) Chairman and members of the BEI.
(b) Watchers who shall stay only in the space reserved for them;
(c) Representatives of the Commission;
(d) Voters casting their votes;
(e) Voters waiting for their turn to vote;
(f) Voters waiting for their turn to get their ballots; and
(g) Others who may be specifically authorized by the Commission.

Unless specifically authorized by the Commission, it is unlawful for any officer or member of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) or the Philippine National Police (PNP) or any peace officer or armed person belonging to any extra-legal police agency, special forces, reaction forces, strike forces, Civilian Armed Force Geographical Units (CAFGUs), *barangay tanods*, or other similar forces or paramilitary forces, including special forces, security guards, special policemen, and all other kinds of armed or unarmed extra-legal police forces, to enter any polling place or stay within a radius of fifty (50) meters thereof, except to vote, in which case they shall immediately leave the polling place after voting.

In case of policemen or peace officers, they may stay outside the polling place within a radius of thirty (30) meters to be easily called by the BEI at any time when they are ordered in writing by a majority vote of the BEI for their protection and that of the voters or that of the election documents and paraphernalia. Such orders shall be entered in the Minutes. In no case shall the policemen or peace officers hold conversation with any voter or disturb, prevent or obstruct in any manner the free access of the voters to the polling place.

However, policemen or peace officers are allowed to enter the polling place when there is an actual or imminent danger of disturbance of the peace and order in the polling place.

No *barangay* official shall enter any polling place except to vote, in which case, he shall immediately leave the polling place after voting.

Sec. 27. ***Authentication of ballot.*** — In every case, the chairman of the BEI shall, in the presence of the voter, affix his signature at the back of the ballot before issuing it to the voter.

Failure to authenticate the ballot shall constitute an election offense.

Sec. 28. ***Order of voting.*** — The voters shall fall in line in the order of their arrival in the polling place and cast their votes in the same order. They shall not crowd around the table of the BEI and shall immediately depart after having voted.

Sec. 29. ***Manner of obtaining ballots.*** — The voter shall approach the chairman and give his name and address together with the other data concerning his person.

If any member of the BEI doubts the identity of the voter, the BEI shall require the voter to present any authentic document which may establish his identity, except *barangay* certificate or community tax certificate. If the BEI is satisfied with his identity, the chairman shall distinctly announce the voter's name in a tone loud enough to be plainly heard throughout the polling place. If such voter has not been challenged, or having been challenged, the question has been decided in his favor, the voter shall be given a ballot.

Before giving the ballot to the voter, the chairman shall check if the right forefingernail of the voter, or any other fingernail if there be no right forefinger, is stained with indelible ink, in which case the voter shall not be given a ballot. Such fact shall be entered in the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes.

If the voter's right forefingernail is not stained with indelible ink, the ballot shall be issued to the voter, as follows:

If the Voter Registration Record is available

The Chairman shall:

(a) Announce the serial number of the ballot to be issued to the voter;
(b) Enter said serial number on the corresponding space on the voting record at the back of the Voter's Registration Record. The Poll Clerk shall also enter the serial number of the ballot on the corresponding column on EDCVL;
(c) Authenticate the ballot by affixing his signature at the back thereof;
(d) Fold the ballot in such a manner that its face, except the portion where the serial number appears is covered, and give the same to the voter.

The voter shall, upon receipt of the ballot, forthwith affix his signature or in case of an illiterate or disabled voter, his thumbmark, on the proper space on his voting record at the back of his Voter Registration Record. He shall not be required to affix his signature or thumbmark on EDCVL.

If the Voter's Registration Record is not available, missing or destroyed

The Chairman shall:

(a) Announce the serial number of the ballot to be issued to the voter;
(b) Enter said serial number and affix his signature on the appropriate columns on EDCVL;
(c) Authenticate the ballot by affixing his signature at the back thereof; and
(d) Fold the ballot in such a manner that its face, except the portion where the serial number appears is covered, and give the same to the voter.

The voter shall, upon receipt of the ballot, forthwith affix his signature or in case of an illiterate or disabled voter, his thumbmark.

No person other than the chairman shall deliver official ballots nor shall more than one ballot be delivered at one time.

Sec. 30. ***Manner of voting.*** — The voter, upon receiving his folded ballot, shall, using a ballot secrecy folder, fill his ballot by writing in the corresponding spaces the names of the individual candidates he desires to vote for and the name of the registered party, organization or coalition he wants represented under the party-list system of representation.

It shall be unlawful to use carbon paper, paraffin paper or other means for making a copy of the contents of the ballot or make use of any means to identify the voter or his vote.

Sec. 31. ***Preparation of ballots for illiterate and disabled voters.*** — (a) No voter shall be allowed to vote as illiterate or physically disabled unless such fact is so indicated in his Voter Registration Record, or the fact of his disability is apparent from his physical condition;

(b) A voter who is illiterate or physically unable to prepare the ballot by himself may be assisted in the preparation of his ballot by a relative by consanguinity or affinity within the fourth civil degree, or if he has none, by any person of his confidence who belongs to the same household, or by any member of the BEI;
(c) No person may assist an illiterate or disabled voter more than three (3) times, except the members of the BEI;
(d) In all cases, the poll clerk shall first verify from the illiterate or disabled voter whether the latter had authorized the assistor to prepare the ballot for him;
(e) The assistor shall prepare the ballot for the illiterate or disabled voter using the ballot secrecy folder in the presence of the latter; and
(f) The assistor shall bind himself in writing and under oath to fill the ballot strictly in accordance with the instructions of the voter and not to reveal the contents of the ballot, by affixing his signature in the appropriate space in the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes.

Sec. 32. ***Accessibility of polling place to physically disabled voters.*** — The election officers, in coordination with the proper school or building officials, shall see to it that the designated polling places of precincts where there are physically disabled registered voters as shown in the Voter Registration Records, are located in the ground floors of the polling centers so that the physically disabled voters can have easy access thereto.

Sec. 33. ***Spoiled ballots.*** — If a voter accidentally spoil or deface a ballot in such a way that it can no longer be lawfully used, he shall surrender it folded to the chairman who shall note in the corresponding space in the voter's voting record and/or EDCVL that said ballot is spoiled. The voter shall then be given another ballot duly authenticated by the chairman after announcing the serial number of the second ballot and recording said serial number in the corresponding space in the voter's voting record and/or EDCVL. If the second ballot is again spoiled or defaced in such a way that it can no longer be lawfully used, the same shall be surrendered correctly folded to the chairman in the same manner as the first spoiled or defaced ballot. No voter, however, shall change his ballot more than once.

The spoiled ballot shall, without being unfolded and without removing the detachable coupon, be distinctly marked with the word "spoiled" and signed by the Chairman of the BEI at the back thereof and immediately placed in the compartment of the ballot box for spoiled ballots.

Sec. 34. ***Procedure after voting.*** — (a) After the voter has filled his ballot, he shall fold it in the same manner as when he received it;

(b) In the presence of all the members of the BEI, he shall affix his thumbmark in the corresponding space in the ballot coupon, and return the folded ballot to the chairman;
(c) The chairman, in the presence of the voter and all the members of the BEI, without unfolding the ballot or seeing its contents, shall verify its serial number as against the number previously entered in the voter's voting record and/or EDCVL to determine whether it is the same ballot given to the voter.
Any ballot returned to the chairman, the serial number of which does not tally with the number of the ballot delivered to the voter as entered in voter's voting record and/or EDCVL, shall be considered "spoiled" and shall be so marked and signed by the Chairman of the BEI, and placed inside the compartment for spoiled ballots.
(d) The voter shall forthwith affix his thumbmark in the corresponding space in his voting record or EDCVL, and the Chairman shall apply a drop of

indelible stain ink at the base and extending to the cuticle of the right forefingernail of the voter, or any other finger nail if there be no right forefingernail.

(e) The Chairman shall sign in the proper space in the voter's voting record and/or EDCVL;

(f) The chairman shall detach the ballot coupon in the presence of the other members of the BEI and of the voter, and shall deposit the folded ballot in the compartment of the ballot box for valid ballots and the detached coupon in the compartment for spoiled ballots.
Any ballot returned to the chairman, the detachable coupon of which has been removed not in the presence of the other members of the BEI and of the voter, or any ballot, shall be considered "spoiled" and shall be so marked and signed by the Chairman of the BEI, and placed inside the compartment for spoiled ballots.

(g) The voter shall then depart.

Sec. 35. *Challenge against illegal voters.* — (a) Any voter or watcher may challenge any person offering to vote for: 1) Not being registered; 2) using the name of another; 3) suffering from an existing disqualification; or 4) a double/multiple registrant.

In such case, the BEI shall satisfy itself as to whether or not the ground for the challenge is true by requiring proof of registration, identity or qualification.

(b) No voter shall be required to present his voter's identification card unless his identity is challenged. However, the absence of a voter's identification card shall not preclude the voter from voting if his identity can be established from the photograph or specimen signatures in his registration record, or by presenting any other valid identification document, or if he is identified under oath by a member of the BEI. Such identification shall be reflected in the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes.

Sec. 36. *Challenge based on certain illegal acts.* — Any voter or watcher may challenge any voter offering to vote on the ground that the challenged person has:

(a) Received or expects to receive, paid, offered or promised to pay, contributed, offered or promised to contribute money or anything of value as consideration for his vote or for the vote of another;

(b) Made or received a promise to influence the giving or withholding of any such vote; or

(c) Made a bet or is interested directly or indirectly in a bet which depends upon the results of the election.

The challenged person shall take an oath before the BEI that he has not commited any of the acts alleged in the challenge. Upon taking such oath, the challenge shall be dismissed and the voter shall be allowed to vote. In case the voter refuses to take such oath, the challenge shall be sustained and the voter shall not be allowed to vote.

Sec. 37. *Record of challenges and oaths.* — The poll clerk shall record in the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes all challenges, oaths taken in connection therewith and the decision of the BEI in each case. Copies of the Challenges/Oaths shall be attached to the Minutes (copy for the ballot box). Upon the termination of the voting, he shall certify that the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes contains all the challenges made.

Sec. 38. *Disposition of unused ballots.* — The chairman shall record in the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes the quantity of unused ballots and their serial numbers. Thereafter, he shall, in the presence of the members of the BEI and watchers, tear the unused ballots in half lengthwise without removing the stubs and detachable coupons. The first half of the torn ballots shall be placed in the "Envelope for Other Half of Torn Unused Ballots", which envelope shall be sealed and then submitted to the election officer for safekeeping. It shall remain sealed unless the Commission orders otherwise. The other half shall be placed in the "Envelope for Excess/Spoiled/Half of Torn Unused Ballots", which envelope shall be sealed, and then deposited inside the compartment of the ballot box for spoiled ballots. Such fact shall be entered in the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes.

Sec. 39. *Prohibition against premature announcement of voting.* — Before the termination of the voting, no member of the BEI shall make any announcement as to whether a certain registered voter has already voted or not, as to how many have already voted or how many so far have failed to vote or any other fact tending to show or showing the state of the polls, nor shall he make any statement at any time, except as witness before a court or body.

Article V
COUNTING OF VOTES

Sec. 40. *Counting of votes to be public and without interruption.* — After the voting is finished, the BEI shall count the votes cast and ascertain the results in the polling place. Unless otherwise ordered by the Commission, the BEI shall not adjourn, postpone or delay the counting.

Sec. 41. *Transfer of counting of votes to safer place.* — If on account of imminent danger of violence, terrorism, disorder or similar causes, it becomes necessary to transfer the counting of votes to a safer place, the BEI may effect such transfer to the nearest safe *barangay* or school building within the municipality by unanimous approval of the BEI and concurrence by the majority of the watchers present. This fact shall be recorded in the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes, and all the members of the BEI and the watchers shall manifest their approval and concurrence, respectively, by affixing their signatures therein.

In effecting the transfer, the BEI shall ensure the safety and integrity of all election documents and paraphernalia. The PNP and/or the AFP in the area in consultation with the election officer shall provide adequate security and transport facilities to the members of the BEI and election documents and paraphernalia during the transfer and counting of votes.

Sec. 42. *Preliminaries to the counting of votes.* — The BEI shall unlock the padlocks, open the ballot box and take out the ballots from the compartment for valid ballots. The BEI shall then proceed to examine the ballots to determine whether there are:

(a) *Excess ballots* — The BEI shall count the ballots in the compartment for valid ballots without unfolding them or exposing their contents, except to ascertain that each ballot is single, and compare the number of ballots inside the ballot box with the number of voters who actually voted. If there are more ballots than there are voters who actually voted, all the ballots shall be returned to the compartment for valid ballots and thoroughly mixed therein. The poll clerk, without seeing the ballots and with his back to the ballot box, shall publicly draw out as many ballots as may be equal to the excess and, without unfolding them, place them in the Envelope for Excess Ballots.

If, in the course of examination, ballots are found folded together before they were deposited in the box, they shall be placed in the Envelope for Excess Ballots.

(b) *Ballots with detachable coupons* — In case ballots with undetached coupons are found in the ballot box, the coupons shall be removed and deposited in the compartment for spoiled ballots. The ballots shall be included in the pile of valid ballots.

(c) *Ballots with the word "spoiled"* — If ballots with the word "spoiled" should be found in the compartment for valid ballots, they shall be placed in the corresponding Envelope for Spoiled Ballots.

(d) *Marked ballots* — The BEI shall then unfold the ballots and determine whether there are any marked ballots. If any should be found, they shall be placed in an Envelope for Marked Ballots.

Excess, spoiled and marked ballots shall not be read during the counting of votes. The envelope containing the excess, spoiled and marked ballots shall be signed and sealed by the members of the BEI and deposited in the compartment for valid ballots.

Sec. 43. *Ballots deposited in the compartment for spoiled ballots.* — The ballots deposited in the compartment for spoiled ballots shall be presumed to be spoiled, whether or not they contain such notation; but if the BEI should find that during the voting any valid ballot was erroneously deposited in this compartment, the BEI shall open said compartment after the voting and before the counting of votes for the sole purpose of drawing out the ballots erroneously deposited therein. The valid ballots so withdrawn shall be mixed with the other valid ballots. Such facts shall be recorded in the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes.

Sec. 44. *Manner of counting of votes.* — The BEI shall unfold the ballots and form separate piles of one hundred (100) ballots each held together by rubber bands. The chairman of the BEI shall take the ballots of the first pile one by one and read the names of the candidates voted for and the offices for which they were voted as well as the name of the party, organization or coalition voted for under the party-list system, in the order in which they appear thereon. During the counting, the chairman, the poll clerk and the third member shall position themselves in such a way as to give the watchers and the public an unimpeded view of the ballot being read by the chairman, as well as of the election returns and tally board being simultaneously accomplished by the poll clerk and the third member, respectively. The watchers and the public shall not touch any of the said election documents. The table shall be cleared of all unnecessary writing paraphernalia. Any violation hereof shall constitute an election offense.

The poll clerk and the third member shall record simultaneously in the election returns and in the tally board, respectively, each vote as it is read. Each vote shall be recorded by a vertical line, except every fifth vote which shall be recorded by a diagonal line crossing the previous four vertical lines.

The same procedure shall be followed with the succeeding piles of ballots.

After all the ballots have been read, the BEI shall record, in words and in figures, the total number of votes obtained by each candidate and by each party, organization or coalition participating under the party-list system, both in the election returns and in the tally board. The counted ballots shall be placed in an envelope provided for the purpose, which envelope shall be sealed, signed and deposited in the compartment for valid ballots. The tally board as accomplished and certified by the BEI shall not be changed or destroyed but shall be kept in the compartment for valid ballots.

Sec. 45. *Rules for the appreciation of ballots.* — In the reading and appreciation of ballots, every ballot shall be presumed to be valid unless there is clear and good reason to justify its rejection. The BEI shall observe the following rules, bearing in mind that the object of the election is to obtain the expression of the voters will:

(a) Where only the first name of a candidate or only his surname is written, the vote for such candidate is valid, if there is no other candidate with the same first name or surname for the same office.
Where the name of a party, organization, coalition participating under the party list system (hereinafter referred to as party) is incompletely written or not in the proper order as appearing in the certified list of parties, the vote for such party, if identifiable, is valid if there is no other party using the same name;

(b) Where only the first name of a candidate is written on the ballot, which when read, has a sound similar to the surname of another candidate, the vote shall be counted in favor of the candidate with such surname. If there are two or more candidates with the same full name, first name or surname and one of them is the incumbent, and on the ballot is written only such full name, first name or surname, the vote shall be counted in favor of the incumbent;

(c) In case the candidate is a woman who uses her maiden or married surname or both and there is another candidate with the same surname, a ballot bearing only such surname shall be counted in favor of the candidate who is an incumbent;

(d) When two or more words are written on the same line on the ballot, all of which are the surnames of two or more candidates, the same shall not be counted for any of them, unless one is a surname of an incumbent who has served for at least one year in which case it shall be counted in favor of the latter;
When two or more words are written on different lines on the ballot all of which are the surnames of two or more candidates bearing the same surname for an office for which the law authorizes the election of more than one and there are the same number of such surnames written as there are candidates with that surname, the vote shall be counted favor of all the candidates bearing the surname;

(e) When on the ballot is written a single word which is the first name of a candidate and which is at the same time the surname of his opponent, the vote shall be counted in favor of the latter;

(f) When two words are written on the ballot, one of which is the first name of a candidate and the other is the surname of his opponent, the vote shall not be counted for either;

(g) A name or surname incorrectly written which, when read, has a sound similar to the name or surname of a candidate when correctly written shall be counted in his favor;
A name incorrectly written which, when read, has a sound similar to the name of a party when correctly written shall be counted in its favor;

(h) When a name of a candidate appears in a space of the ballot for an office for which he is a candidate and in another space for which he is not a candidate, it shall be counted in his favor for the office for which he is a candidate and the vote for the office for which he is not a candidate shall be considered as stray, except when it is used as a means to identify the voter, in which case, the whole ballot shall be void.
When the name of a party appears in a space of the ballot for an office other than for the party list, it shall be considered stray but it shall not invalidate the whole ballot except when it is used as means to identify the voter, in which case, the whole ballots shall be void.
If the word or words written on the appropriate blank space on the ballot is the identical name or surname or full name, as the case may be, of two or more candidates for the same office none of whom is an incumbent, the vote shall be counted in favor of that candidate to whose ticket belong all the other candidates voted for in the same ballot for the same constituency.

(i) When in a space in the ballot there appears a name of a candidate or party that is erased and another clearly written, the vote is valid for the latter;

(j) The erroneous initial of the first name which accompanies the correct surname of a candidate, the erroneous initial of the surname accompanying the correct first name of a candidate, or the erroneous middle initial of the candidate shall not annul the vote in favor of the latter.

(k) The fact that there exists another person who is not a candidate with the first name or surname of a candidate shall not prevent the adjudication of the vote of the latter;

(l) Ballots which contain prefixes as such "Sr." "Mr.", "Datu", "Don", "Ginoo", "Hon.", "Gob.", or suffixes like "Hijo", "Jr.", "Segundo", are valid.

(m) The use of the nicknames and appellations of affection and friendship, if accompanied by the first name or surname of the candidate, does not annul such vote, except when they were used as means to identify the voter, in which case the whole ballot is invalid: Provided, That if the nickname used is unaccompanied by the name or surname of a candidate and it is the one by which he is generally or popularly known in the locality, the name shall be counted in favor of said candidate, if there is no other candidate for the same office with the same nickname;

(n) Any vote containing initials only or which is illegible or which does not sufficiently identify the candidate for whom it is intended shall be considered as a stray vote but shall not invalidate the whole ballot.
The initials of a party shall be considered valid provided they are the same initials as appearing in the certified list of parties;

(o) If on the ballot is correctly written the first name of a candidate but with a different surname, or the surname of the candidate is correctly written but with a different first name, the vote shall not be counted in favor of any candidate having such first name and/or surname but the ballot shall be considered valid for other candidates;

(p) Any ballot written with crayon, lead pencil, or in ink, wholly or in part, shall be valid;

(q) Where there are two or more candidates/parties voted for in an office for which the law authorizes the election of only one, the vote shall not be counted in favor of any of them, but this shall not affect the validity of the votes therein;

(r) If the candidates voted for exceed the number of those to be elected, the ballot is valid, but the votes shall be counted only in favor of the candidates whose names were firstly written by the voter within the space provided for said office in the ballot until the authorized number is covered;

(s) Any vote in favor of a person who has not filed a certificate of candidacy or in favor of a candidate for an office for which he did not present himself shall be considered as a stray vote but it shall not invalidate the whole ballot;
A vote cast for a party not entitled to be voted for shall not be counted;

(t) Ballots containing the name of a candidate or party printed and pasted on a blank space of the ballot or affixed thereto through any mechanical process are totally null and void;

(u) Circles, crosses or lines put on the spaces on which the voter has not voted shall be considered as signs to indicate his desistance from voting and shall not invalidate the ballot;

(v) Unless it should clearly appear that they have been deliberately put by the voter to serve as identification marks, commas, dots, lines, or hyphens between the first name and surname of a candidate, or in other parts of the ballot, traces of the letter "T", "J" and other similar ones, the first letters or syllables of names which the voter does not continue, the use of two or more kinds of writing and unintentional or accidental flourishes, strokes or strains, shall not invalidate the ballot;

(w) Any ballot which clearly appears to have been filled by two distinct persons before it was deposited in the ballot box during the voting is totally null and void;

(x) Any vote cast in favor of a candidate or party who has been disqualified by final judgment shall be considered as stray and shall not be counted but it shall not invalidate the ballot;

(y) Ballots wholly written in Arabic in localities where it is of general use are valid. To read them, the BEI may employ an interpreter who shall take an oath that he shall read the votes correctly;

(z) The accidental tearing or perforation of a ballot does not annul it; and

(aa) Failure to remove the detachable coupon from a ballot does not annul such ballot.

Article VI
PREPARATION AND SAFEKEEPING OF ELECTION RETURNS AND OTHER ELECTION FORMS AND PARAPHERNALIA

Sec. 46. *Preparation of election returns.* — All data required in the election returns shall be accomplished in handwriting and in a manner such that the entries on the first copy are clearly impressed in all the other copies.

The total number of votes for each candidate and for each party, sectoral organization or coalition participating under the party-list system of representation shall be closed with the signatures and the clear imprints of the right thumbmarks of all the members, affixed in full view of the public, immediately after the last vote recorded or immediately after the name of the candidate receiving no vote.

The six (6) principal watchers representing the six (6) accredited major political parties in a precinct shall, if available, affix their signatures and right thumbmarks in the election returns for the precinct.

Immediately after the accomplishment of the election returns, each copy thereof shall be placed in the proper envelope to be distributed as follows:

(a) For President, Vice President, Senators, Members of the House of Representatives, and parties, organizations or coalitions participating under the party-list system

1) The *first* copy, to the City or Municipal Board of Canvassers;
2) The *second* copy, to the Congress, directed to the President of the Senate;
3) The *third* copy, to the Commission;
4) The *fourth* copy, to the dominant majority party as determined by the Commission;
5) The *fifth* copy, to the dominant minority party as determined by the Commission;
6) The *sixth* copy, to NAMFREL, the citizen's arm authorized by the Commission to conduct an unofficial count;
7) The *seventh* copy, to be deposited inside the compartment of the ballot box for valid ballots.

(b) For local officials:

1) The *first* copy, to the City or Municipal Board of Canvassers;
2) The *second* copy, to the Commission;
3) The *third* copy, to the Provincial Board of Canvassers;
4) The *fourth* copy, to the dominant majority party as determined by the Commission;
5) The *fifth* copy, to the dominant minority party as determined by the Commission;
6) The *sixth* copy, to the citizens' arm authorized by the Commission to conduct an unofficial count; and
7) The *seventh* copy, to be deposited inside the compartment of the ballot box for valid ballot.

Sec. 47. *Announcement of the result of the election in the polling place.* — Upon the completion of the election returns, the chairman of the BEI shall publicly announce the total number of votes received by each candidate stating their corresponding offices, as well as the total number of votes received by a party, sectoral organization or coalition participating under the party-list system of representation.

Sec. 48. *Certificate of Votes.* — After the counting of votes and the announcement of the results of the election in the precinct, and before leaving the polling place, the BEI shall issue Certificates of Votes upon request of the duly accredited watchers. The Certificate shall contain the total number of votes obtained by each candidate or party, sectoral organization or coalition participating under the party-list system of representation, written in words and in figures, the precinct number, the name of the barangay, city or municipality and province, the total number of voters who voted in the precinct and the date and time of its issuance. The Certificate of Votes shall be signed and thumbmarked by each member of the BEI.

The BEI shall require the requesting watcher to acknowledge receipt thereof.

The refusal of the chairman and members of the BEI to furnish said Certificate of Votes shall constitute an election offense.

Sec. 49. *Alteration and correction in the election returns.* — Any correction or alteration in the election returns made by the BEI before the announcement of the results of the election in the polling place shall be duly initialed by all the members thereof.

After announcement of the results of the election in the polling place, the BEI shall not make any alteration or amendment in any of the copies of the election returns, unless so ordered by the Commission upon petition of all or the majority of the members of the BEI within five (5) days from the date of the election or twenty-four (24) hours from the time a copy of the election returns concerned is opened by the Board of Canvassers, whichever is earlier. The petition shall be accompanied by proof of service upon all candidates affected. If the petition is filed by all members of the BEI and the result of the election would not be affected by said correction and none of the candidates affected objects thereto, the Commission, upon being satisfied of the veracity of the petition and of the error alleged therein, shall order the BEI to make the proper correction on the election returns.

However, if a candidate affected by said petition objects thereto, whether the petition is filed by all or only a majority of the members of the BEI and the result of the election would be affected by the correction sought to be made, the Commission shall proceed summarily to hear the petition. If it finds the petition meritorious and there is no evidence or sign indicating that the identity and integrity of the ballot box have been violated, the Commission shall order the opening of the ballot box. After satisfying itself that the integrity of the ballots therein has also been duly preserved, the Commission shall order the recounting of the votes of the candidates affected and the proper corrections made on the election returns, unless the correction sought is such that it can be made without the need of opening the ballot box

Sec. 50. ***Disposition of ballot boxes, keys, election returns and other documents.*** — Upon the termination of the counting of votes and the announcement of the results of the election in the precinct, the BEI shall:

(a) Place the following documents inside the compartment of the ballot box for valid ballots.
  1) Envelope containing used/counted official ballots;
  2) Envelope containing excess/marked/spoiled/half of torn unused official ballots;
  3) Envelope containing the copy of the election returns for the ballot box;
  4) Envelope containing one copy of the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes (copy for the ballot box);
  5) Tally Board; and
  6) Stubs of used pads of official ballots.

(b) Close the inner compartments of the ballot box, lock them with one (1) self-locking fixed-length seal and then lock the outer cover with the (3) padlocks and one (1) self-locking fixed-length seal. The three keys to the padlocks shall be placed in separate envelopes which shall be sealed and signed by all members of the BEI;

(c) Deliver the ballot box to the city or municipal treasurer. In case the ballot box delivered by the BEI was not locked and/or sealed, the treasurer shall lock and/or seal the ballot box. The treasurer shall include such fact, including the serial number of the self-locking fixed-length seal used, in his report to the Commission;

(d) Deliver to the Election Officer:
  1) Book of Voters;
  2) EDCVL (CVL Form No. 2);
  3) Two (2) copies of PCVL (CVL Report 1-B);
  4) Two (2) copies of the certified list of deactivated voters;
  5) Three (3) envelopes, each containing a key to a padlock of the ballot box which shall be delivered, under proper receipt, by the election officer to the provincial election supervisor, the provincial prosecutor and the provincial treasurer. In the case of cities whose voters do not vote for provincial officials, and municipalities in the National Capital Region, the election officer shall retain one envelope and distribute the two other envelopes to the city/municipal prosecutor and city/municipal treasurer, as the case may be.
  6) Envelope containing a copy of the Minutes of Voting and Counting of Votes (copy for the Commission);
  7) Thumbprint takers and all bottles of indelible ink, whether used or unused; and
  8) Envelope containing the other half of the torn unused official ballots.

On the day after the election, the election officer or the treasurer, as the case may be, shall require the BEI who failed to deliver the election records or paraphernalia mentioned herein to deliver the same immediately.

The ballot box, all supplies of the BEI and all pertinent papers and documents shall immediately be delivered by the BEI, accompanied by watchers, to the city/municipal treasurer. For this purpose, the city/municipal treasurer shall, if necessary, keep his office open all night on the day of the election and shall provide the necessary facilities for said delivery at the expense of the city/municipality.

Sec. 51. *Preservation of the voting record.* — The election officer shall keep the lists of voters (EDCVL and PCVL) used in the election in a safe place until such time that the Commission gives instructions on their disposition.

Sec. 52. **Omission or erroneous inclusion of documents in ballot box.** — If after locking the ballot box, the BEI discovers that some documents or articles required to be placed in the ballot box were not placed therein, the BEI, instead of opening the ballot box in order to place therein said documents or articles, shall deliver the same to the election officer. In no instance shall the ballot box be reopened to place therein or to take out therefrom any document or article except in proper cases and with prior written authority of the Commission, or its duly authorized official, to retrieve copies of the election returns which will be needed in any canvass. In such instance, the members of the BEI and the watchers shall be notified of the time and place of the opening of said ballot box. However, if there are other copies of the election returns outside of the ballot box which can be used in the canvass, such copies of the election returns shall be used in said canvass and the opening of the ballot box to retrieve copies of the election returns placed therein shall then be dispensed with.

In case the BEI fails to place the envelope containing the counted ballots inside the ballot box, the election officer shall, with notice to parties, deposit said envelopes in a separate ballot box which shall be properly sealed, padlocked and stored in a safe place in his office. Said ballot boxes shall remain sealed unless otherwise ordered by the Commission.

Article VII
DELIVERY AND TRANSMITTAL OF ELECTION RETURNS

Sec. 53. *Delivery and transmittal of election returns.* — The BEI shall deliver to the election officer copies of the election returns intended for the following:

(a) City/Municipal Board of Canvassers;
(b) Commission on Elections;
(c) The Congress, directed to the President of the Senate; and
(d) Provincial Board of Canvassers.

The copies of the election returns intended for the dominant majority party, the dominant minority party and the citizens' arm authorized by the Commission to conduct an unofficial count, shall be given at the polling place to their respective representatives who have been authorized by said parties and organizations to receive such copies. Unclaimed election returns intended for the dominant majority party, the dominant minority party and the citizens' arm shall be turned-over to the election officer, who shall take custody of the same until they are claimed by the parties concerned.

Sec. 54. ***Delivery and transmittal of election returns by the election officer.*** — The election officer shall segregate all copies of the election returns received from the BEI and deposit them in separate ballot boxes, lock each ballot box with three padlocks, and deliver the ballot boxes and their keys to the body or office concerned with sufficient security escort from either the PNP or AFP and watchers of political parties, candidates and the accredited citizens' arm of the Commission, as follows:

(a) In the National Capital Region:
  1) In cities, to their respective City Boards of Canvassers;
  2) In municipalities each comprising one legislative district, to their respective District Boards of Canvassers; and
  3) In component municipalities, to their respective Municipal Boards of Canvassers.

The ballot boxes bearing the envelopes containing copies of the election returns intended for the Congress, the Commission and the Provincial Board of Canvassers, and their keys, shall be delivered to the regional election director of the National Capital Region (NCR). The NCR regional director shall, in turn, transmit the ballot boxes intended for Congress and the Commission to the said offices, together with their keys. The ballot boxes intended for the Provincial Board of Canvassers shall be kept by the NCR Regional Director.

(b) ***In areas outside Metro Manila,*** the ballot boxes containing copies of election returns intended for the City or Municipal Boards of Canvassers, with their keys, shall be immediately delivered to the said boards.

The ballot boxes containing copies of the election returns intended for the Congress, the Commission and the provincial boards of canvassers, with their keys, shall be submitted by the election assistant of the office of the election officer to the office of the provincial election supervisor, using the fastest means of transportation available not later than twelve o'clock noon on May 11, 2004.

If within six hours of the first delivery, not all of the election returns from the precincts of the city or municipality have been submitted, the election officer shall designate another personnel in his office who is trustworthy to receive and deliver the remaining copies of the election returns to the office of the provincial election supervisor.

In all instances, the election office and the election assistant shall observe and comply with the above procedure of delivering said copies of the election returns at intervals of six hours or shorter when possible until all the election returns in his jurisdiction are delivered to the office of the provincial election supervisor at the earliest possible time, but not later than May 12, 2004.

The most senior and able election assistant in the office of the provincial election supervisor shall receive the copies of the election returns delivered by the election assistants of the cities/municipalities of the province, issue proper receipt therefor and immediately submit said returns to the provincial board of canvassers. For purposes of transmitting copies of the election returns intended for the Congress and the Commission, the provincial election supervisor shall designate the most senior election assistant to transmit the same to the Commission on Elections and to the Office of the Senate President in Manila, within twelve hours from the first delivery, using the fastest means of transportation. Election returns which are received after the departure of said personnel of the Office of the Provincial Election Supervisor shall be delivered to the Congress and the Commission in Manila by another responsible personnel in the office of the provincial election supervisor within twelve hours from the first delivery.

In all instances, the provincial election supervisor shall see to it that the above procedure of delivery of copies of the election returns at intervals of twelve hours or shorter when possible, is faithfully complied with, to the end that all copies of the election returns for the Congress and the Commission are delivered not later that May 13, 2004. In every case, delivery shall be undertaken with sufficient security escort and watchers of candidates, parties, organization or coalition.

Sec. 55. *Special procedures.* — The express provisions of this resolution notwithstanding, the Commission may adopt special procedures in the transmission, storage, custody, distribution and retrieval of accountable forms and paraphernalia in exceptional cases to fulfill its constitutional mandate to ensure free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible elections.

Sec. 56. *Effectivity.* — This resolution shall take effect after seven (7) days from its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Sec. 57. *Dissemination.* — Let the Education and Information Department, this Commission, cause the publication of this resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines, and immediately furnish copies thereof to all election officers, provincial election supervisors, regional election directors and to the Department of Education.

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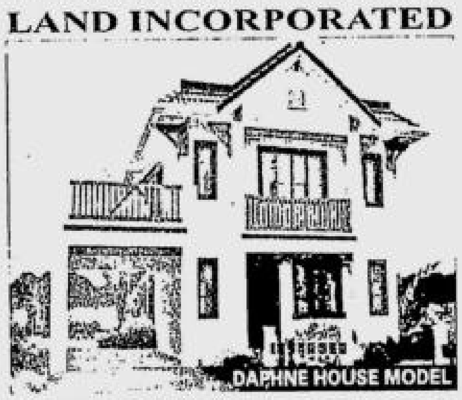

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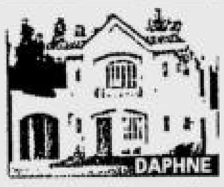
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Item Package	Description	Ceiling Bid Price
1	One (1) unit Brand New Backhoe Loader	P 4,500,000.00

Eligibility requirements per item package are available at the Purchasing Division Office starting March 12, 2004 during its business hours. Deadline for the submission of eligibility documents/requirements will be on or before April 05, 2004.

Bid documents may be released only to applicants with Notice of Eligibility, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P 500.00 per package starting April 16, 2004.

Pre-bidding is set on May 12, 2004 at 3:00 pm and the Opening of Bids on May 21, 2004 at 9:00 am at the DCWD Board Room, J.P. Laurel Ave., Davao City.

DCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids, or to waive any formality/informality of the bids and to accept only such bids which are advantageous to the District.

(Sgd.) ALFONSO E. LAID
AGM for Administration
Chairman, Bid & Canvass Committee

(PDI--March 12 & 19, 2004)

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

HEAVY EQUIPMENT

WANT TO BUY
Construction Equipment
PAYLOADER WA 300, WA 350, WA 400, WA 450
CAT 950 950B 966C 966D
EXCAVATOR EX200-1, EX200-2
CAT 320 320 B
WHEEL EXCAVATOR HITACHI UHO1 W EX100 WD
BULLDOZER KOMATSU
D65-18, D85-21 D155A 1 D155A-2
Please call Tel 2436435-36
Fax 2436433

WANTED TO BUY

BUY • SELL • PAWN
ROLEX+OTHERS
DIAMONDS/JEWELRY
Repair / Polish Any watch
MANILA WATCH EXCHANGE
Hyatt • 804-0484 / 834-2886
Greenhills • 724-4374

WE BUY AT HIGH PRICE
PawnTickets. Loans 5%
ROLEX
5646593 5897041
5633742 0917-8473744

BUYING ROLEX
Other WATCHES, BEST PRICE
0917-8142309 • 7269687
7220433 • 4123543

PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

MEYCAUAYAN-FILIPINAS Pawnshop, Alw Complex, Calvario, Meyc. Bulacan. All unredeemed pledges of Sept. 2003 will be auctioned on March 24, 8:30 am. Lanuza & Sons-Auctioneer.
(PDI-March 19, 2004)

MUNOZ-FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP, Roosevelt Ave., Katipunan, Diliman, Quezon City. All unredeemed pledges of Oct 2003 will be auctioned on Mar 24, 3:00 PM. Lanuza & Sons - Auctioneer.
(PDI-March 19, 2004)

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of extra judicial partition of the estate of the late Justice Andres C. Reyes, Sr. has been settled as per Doc. No. 265; Page No. 53; Book No II; Series of 2003 before Notary Public Atty. Ma. Lourdes Reyes for the City of Makati (PDI - March 19, 26 & April 2, 2004)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

BIG BIG SAVINGS! Beat the 15%-35% Price Increase of Pension Plan on April 1 /Dave 0917-8349338

I NEED MEDICINES HOSP SUPPLIES & EQUIPT ANY QNTY TXT /CALL09275282875 Kristine

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

GLOBAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY
that assists in air management in polluted cities worldwide.
Send email enquiries to :
GlobalAirBiz@yahoo.com.sg

Invest 6K & Earn 60K in less than a yr call Ogie 7400743 / 0919-6253284

RTW Wholesaler 3738821

FRANCHISING

Bnew! Hair Salon 4 Sale 0917-8980476 P1.9M

DIRECT SALE

SIDELINE JEWELRY CONSIGN ORIENTATION M-S@8-8 4531478

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE

WANTED DRIVER 8950775

FEMALE

50 PROMO GIRLS FACTORY WORKERS 4155119 /4155409

Teacher Bsed w/ Govt Lic. 655-0609

MALE/FEMALE

Direct Hire Ofc Mrktng Staff 18 /45yo coll level/grad w/w/o exp start asap 4390226 Racquel

DH (CHRISTIAN/MUSLIM); COOK; BEAUTICIAN ALL AROUND RECEPTIONIST; MASON /CARPENTER; BUILDING PAINTER; A/V TECHNICIAN; DENTIST; NURSE; SECRETARY CALL US 5300159 / 5224435 LOOK PERLA OR JOEY

FREE CAREGIVER TRAINING PROGRAM W/CERTIFICATE 5212773 5614990 5899958

WTC is in need of Teachers: Chem. Physics & English. (02)8290978 / 09162636393

PERSONAL

NOVENA TO THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND SAINT JUDE

May the most Sacred Heart of Jesus be praised, blessed, loved, adored and glorified throughout the whole world now and forever. Amen.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Pray for us

St. Jude, worker of miracles, helper for the helpless, pray for us.

Say nine times a day for nine days. Prayer will be answered by the eighth day. It has never failed.

Thank you very much Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude, for favor granted.

LOURDES SCHOOL OF MANDALUYONG

Shaw Blvd., City of Mandaluyong
Tel. Nos. 631-6310; 631-6307; 631-6356; 632-9547; Fax # 631-6310

WANTED FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2004-2005

GRADE SCHOOL MATH, ENGLISH, COMPUTER, SCIENCE, CHRISTIAN LIVING AND MAPE TEACHERS

SECONDARY TEACHERS MAJOR IN ENGLISH, SCIENCE (PHYSICS/CHEMISTRY), CHRISTIAN LIVING AND MUSIC

GUIDANCE COUNSELORS
SCHOOL NURSE

Applicants must be Catholic, not more than 35 years old, with above average scholastic records and must have passed the PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR TEACHERS. ATTRACTIVE SALARY AND BENEFITS AWAIT SUCCESFUL APPLICANTS.

Apply personally and bring your transcript of records on March 22-26 from 8:00-4:00 p.m.

(ALL CLASSROOMS ARE FULLY AIR-CONDITIONED)

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Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
(Head Office)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors currently with Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License to apply for eligibility and if later found eligible, to bid for the project described below:

Project Title	: **Proposed Rehabilitation of Unit D-418 Ocean Villas Condominium**
Scope of Work	: Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision and other services and performing all operations necessary for the completion of the proposed rehabilitation of unit D-418 Ocean Villas Condominium all in accordance with the approved plans and specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract
Project Location	: Puerto Azul, Ternate, Cavite
Approved Budget	: Pesos One Million Five Thousand Pesos Only (P1,005,000.00)
Source of Funding	: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Minimum Requirement (Criteria)	
PCAB License	: IAC Classification at least **"Small B" (Building and Industrial Plant)**
Contractor's Construction Experience	: Should have completed within the last five (5) years (1999 to present) at least one (1) project involving construction/renovation of commercial offices or residential buildings requiring high end finishes costing not less than five hundred thousand pesos. The contractor's project manager should be a registered architect or civil engineer with at least three years experience in construction with projects of similar nature
Certification of Satisfactory Performance	: Should be able to submit notarized affidavits of Satisfactory Performance for the declared completed similar project
Net Financial Contracting Capacity computed as 10x *(Current Asset less Current Liabilities) minus (Value of all on-going contracts including awarded yet to be started)*	: at least One Million Five Thousand Pesos (P1,005,000.00)
Credit Line / Cash Deposit Certificate Req't.	: Pesos One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00)
Eligibility Statement Forms	
Cost of Forms	: Two Hundred Pesos per set (P200.00/set)
Date	: **March 19 to 26, 2004**
Deadline of Submission	: **March 29, 2004**
Notice of Eligibility/Ineligibility	
Date	: **April 14, 2004**
Bid/Tender Documents Issuance	: Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00)
Date	: **April 15 to 16, 2004**
Pre-bid Conference	
Date and Time	: **April 20, 2004 10:00 a.m.**
Venue	: BAC Secretariat, Rm 204, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor P. Ocampo Sts
Submission and Opening of Bids	
Deadline of Submission	: **May 18, 2004 / 10:00 a.m.**

For inquiries, please call **BAC Secretariat – telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.**

The venue for the issuance and submission of accomplished eligibility statements and bid documents is at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204 2nd Floor – Five Storey Building BSP Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sts., Manila, 9:30 am to 12:00 nn & 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Schedule for issuance of **notice of eligibility/ineligibility** up to deadline of **submission of bids** may be subject to change.

The provisions of **Republic Act No. 9184** & its Implementing Rules and Regulations relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation shall apply.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any contractor/s whose bid/s is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obligated to compensate/indemnify the contractor for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) **MARCOS J. SIONGCO, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI–March 19 & 26, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

INVITATION TO BID

The Supreme Court invites interested concessionaires to submit quotations/proposals for the operator of Canteen located at the Multi-Purpose Building, Supreme Court Compound, Padre Faura Street, Manila, that will provide canteen services to more or less 2,500 employees.

Interested concessionaires may secure eligibility requirements and bid documents from the Secretariat, Committee on Bids, Property Division, Supreme Court, after the payment of a non-refundable fee of Eight Hundred Pesos (P800.00). For additional information contact the Secretary, Atty. Ennar Cabanilla at Telefax 4042731 or Norma C. Josue at Telefax 5247425.

I. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

The pre-bid conference shall be on **March 26, 2004** at 2:00 p.m. 3rd Floor Session Hall, Old Building, Supreme Court.

II. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The legal requirements for eligibility of prospective bidders must be personally submitted by the duly authorized representative on **March 31, 2004** at 2:00 p.m. 3rd Floor, Session Hall, Old Building, Supreme Court.

III. OPENING OF BIDS

Only bids of eligible bidders will be accepted and opened in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives on **April 14, 2004** at 10:00 a.m., 3rd Floor, Session Hall, Old Building Supreme Court.

Interested bidders must not be related to the head of the procuring entity or any member of the committee on Bids or COB Secretariat either by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.

The Committee on Bids reserves the right to reject any or all bids waive any defects or informalities therein, or accept any bid/s or offer/s which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the government.

(Sgd.) **JOSE P. PEREZ**
Chairman
Committee on Bids

(PDI–March 12 & 19, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID

The Department of Transportation and Communications, Philippine Coast Guard – Project Management Office (DOTC/PCG-PMO) through the DOTC – PBAC is inviting General Contractors with License Classification of "General Engineering" and IAC Registration of Small B for "Ports, Harbors & Offshore Engineering" for the re-bidding of the Lighthouse Project located at Cabuli Island, El Nido, Palawan.

The scope of work covers civil works, tower erection, electrical installation and other miscellaneous works. The Approved Budget Cost (ABC) for the said lighthouse is P1,206,991.70 and the contract duration shall not be more than one hundred twenty (120) calendar days.

All interested bidders should present the original copies of the following documents on 23 March or before 05 April 2004 at the PCG-PMO, 2nd Floor, S&L Building, Roxas Blvd. corner R. Salas St., Ermita, Manila, to wit:

a. DTI or SEC Registration
b. Mayor's Permit/Municipal License
c. Contractor's License (Certified True Copy)
d. Taxpayer's Identification Number
e. CIAP Certificate that the Contractor is not "Blacklisted"

The following schedule should be strictly observed:

• Issuance of Eligibility Documents	– 23 March – 05 April 2004
• Submission of accomplished Eligibility Statements	– 12 April 2004
• Issuance of Bid Documents, Plans & Drawings	– 20 April 2004
• Pre-Bid Conference	– 21 April 2004
• Submission and Opening of Bids	– 03 May 2004
• Funding Source	– SARO No. A-03-06866 dated 29 December 2003

The Bid Documents, Plans and Drawings will only be issued to registered and eligible bidders upon the payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (Php500.00) at the Cashier's Office of the DOTC, 5th Floor, Columbia Tower, Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City.

Bidders who have initially responded to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid and were declared eligible in the first bidding shall be allowed to submit new bids without necessarily procuring the bid documents earlier obtained.

The DOTC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **AGUSTIN R. BENGZON**
Undersecretary and Chairman, DOTC PBAC
for Maritime/Water Sector Projects

(PDI–March 19, 22 & 24, 2004)

LEYTE III ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(LEYECO III)
Tunga, Leyte

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Leyte III Electric Cooperative, Inc., invites interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply and delivery of various Electrical Materials, Office Equipment and Services.

1. Various Pole Line Hardware & Electrical Materials.
2. NOTEBOOK: Laptop Computer.
3. SOFTWARE for Billing and Collection Unbundling of Rates.
4. Termite Control and Preventive Services of all LEYECO III building.
5. Transformer Rewinding:
   a. 19 u 25 KVA transformer
   b. 19 u 15 KVA transformer
   c. 20 u 10 KVA transformer
6. Fire Extinguisher
   a. 5 u Dry Chem. 20 lbs. (for refilling)
   b. 2 u Dry Chem. 100 lbs. (for refilling)
7. Preventive Maintenance Services (PMS) to 5MVA Power Transformer.
8. Fabrication of Meter box for CLUSTERING per Spec. 100 pcs.

SPECIFIC DATES OF UNDERTAKING

Date of Publication	March 17, 18 & 19, 2004	
Issuance of Bid Documents starts	March 22, 2004	
PRE-BID Conference	April 02, 2004	LEYECO III Conference Room
Submission / Rejection of Bids	April 05 to 23, 2004	
Opening of Bids/Quotations	April 26, 2004	LEYECO III Conference Room

Interested Suppliers to join this bidding are advised to submit accreditation requirements from date of this publication until March 25, 2004 address to the chairman of Accreditation Committee. For complete list description of Pole Line Hardware & Electrical Materials will be distributed during the Pre-bidding conference. Eligibility and Bid Forms tender documents can be obtained from PBAC secretariat at LEYECO III OFFICE upon payment of non-refundable amount of P1,000.00 during the Pre-bidding conference.

The bids and awards committee reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive any defects or formally therein and to accept bids considered complying and most advantageous to the cooperative.

(Sgd.) **ENGR. ESTEBAN L. MANLAPAS**
PBAC Chairman

(PDI – March 17, 18 & 19, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
ISABELA STATE UNIVERSITY
Echague, Isabela

INVITATION TO BID

The Isabela State University invites interested and qualified Security Agencies to participate in the bidding for security services.

Below are the eligibility requirements to be submitted at the office of the Chairman of the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat on or before April 5, 2004.

1. Letter of Intent
2. Company Profile
3. Organizational Chart
4. License to Operate
5. List of License Firearms
6. DTI Registration
7. SEC Registration
8. Mayor's Permit 2004
9. Tax Identification Number
10. VAT Registration
11. List of contracted clients
12. DOLE Clearance
13. SSS Certificate membership/clearance
14. Audited Financial Statement 3 years
15. Certificate that the company is not blacklisted

The pre-bidding conference will be on April 5, 2004, 9:00 A.M. at the ALBA HALL Administration Building, Isabela State University, Echague, Isabela.

The Isabela State University reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any informality or accept such bids as may be considered advantageous to the government.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat or call (078) 672-20-20.

(Sgd.) **ROMEO R. QUILANG**
Chair, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–March 19 & 26, 2004)

More Classifieds
on page B6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS

TransCo

National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

AD NO. MMD-TRANSCO 2004-009

PD Ref. No.: PB040209-EL0024

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (TRANSCO - BAC) - HEAD OFFICE**, invites local bidders/contractors to apply for eligibility who are:
   a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
   b. Partnership duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract: Provided, however, that Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%); or
   e. Cooperative duly registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)
2. Procurement of:

Schedule	Description	Quantity	Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
I	DESKTOP PC	55 UNITS	P 4,675,000.00
II	MOBILE PC	12 UNITS	P 1,500,000.00
III	PC MONITOR	43 UNITS	P 254,000.00
IV	LCD MONITOR	1 UNIT	P 16,500.00
V	CAD/CAE WORK STATION	4 UNITS	P 600,000.00
VI	DIGITAL CAMERA	2 UNITS	P 60,000.00
VII	NETWORK CAMERA	1 UNIT	P 17,000.00
VIII	HIGH QUALITY WEB CAMERA	3 UNITS	P 105,000.00
IX	LASERJET PRINTER (NETWORK)	9 UNITS	P 432,000.00
X	LASERJET PRINTER (STANDALONE)	1 UNIT	P 35,000.00
XI	INKJET PRINTER (STANDALONE)	7 UNITS	P 105,000.00
XII	PORTABLE PRINTER	1 UNIT	P 10,000.00
XIII	PRINTER, DOT MATRIX	1 UNIT	P 35,000.00
XIV	PLOTTER	3 UNITS	P 750,000.00
XV	FACSIMILE	2 UNITS	P 36,000.00
XVI	MULTIMEDIA PROJECTOR	1 UNIT	P 210,000.00
XVII	MOBILE LCD PROJECTOR	1 UNIT	P 132,000.00
XVIII	SCANNER	4 UNITS	P 60,000.00
XIX	UNINTERRUPTIBLE POWER SUPPLY	4 UNITS	P 28,000.00
XX	MULTI-POINT VIDEO CONFERENCING	1 UNIT	P 950,000.00
XXI	RACKMOUNT SERVER	2 UNITS	P 600,000.00
XXII	OFFSITE BACKUP SERVER	1 UNIT	P 500,000.00
XXIII	FILE SERVER	1 UNIT	P 450,000.00
XXIV	PC SERVER	2 UNITS	P 1,200,000.00
XXV	PROTOCOL ANALYZER	2 UNITS	P 600,000.00
XXVI	BACKUP STORAGE MANAGEMENT SYS.	1 LOT	P 225,068.00
XXVII	SWITCH 24-PORT	2 PCS.	P 94,000.00
XXVIII	SWITCH, DATA TRANSFER	2 PCS.	P 2,000.00
XXIX	DUAL SPEED HUB	4 PCS.	P 252,000.00
XXX	1000 BASE-SX GBIC	4 PCS.	P 116,000.00
XXXI	MEMORY FOR COMPAQ PROLIANT ML530	8 UNITS	P 123,200.00
XXXII	MEMORY FOR COMPAQ PROLIANT ML370	2 UNITS	P 120,610.00
XXXIII	MEMORY 256MB	40 UNITS	P 100,000.00
XXXIV	PROCESSOR	40 UNITS	P 380,000.00
XXXV	MOTHERBOARD	40 UNITS	P 184,000.00
XXXVI	DLT EXTERNAL DRIVE	1 UNIT	P 238,650.00
XXXVII	HARD DRIVE	40 UNITS	P 148,000.00
XXXVIII	FLOPPY DISK DRIVE	40 UNITS	P 18,000.00
XXXIX	CD-RW/DVD COMBO DRIVE	40 UNITS	P 160,000.00
XL	HARD DISK	2 UNITS	P 50,500.00
XLI	CASING	40 UNITS	P 72,000.00
XLII	VIDEO CARD	40 UNITS	P 80,000.00
XLIII	MS WINDOWS XP PROFESSIONAL	20 UNITS	P 160,000.00
XLIV	ISO17799/BS7799 TOOL KIT	1 UNIT	P 55,000.00
XLV	SOFTWARE, NETWORK MANAGEMENT SECURITY	1 PACK	P 484,000.00
XLVI	56K EXTERNAL ANALOGUE MODEM	30 UNITS	P 420,000.00
	TOTAL		P16,843,528.00

3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall be specified in the Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents that will be issued.

   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is **P16,843,528.00** to be sourced from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.
4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting **March 12, 2004 to April 7, 2004** at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) per set.
5. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **March 31, 2004 at 2:00 p.m.** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before **1:30 p.m. of April 12, 2004** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
7. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the Corporation.
9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. LABAYANI**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - March 12 & 19, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Iloilo
Municipality of Concepcion

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

ITB No. 2004-NCB-PM-001

Date: March 9, 2004

To: All Eligible Suppliers,

The Municipality of Concepcion is a recipient of a grant from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) through the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) towards the financing of the Construction Cost for the first Agrarian Reform Community Project (ARCP) in Barangay Agnaga and Barangay Calamigan. The amount intends to cover eligible payments for the Concreting/Rehabilitation of Junction National Road Sitio Agnaga Proper – Sitio Belen, Calamigan.

This invitation is open to all suppliers from eligible sources throughout the country. The Municipal Government of Concepcion, Iloilo and its implementing partners, DAR – ADB invites sealed offers/quotations from eligible suppliers for furnishing the supply of various construction materials amounting to Six Million Six Hundred Fourteen Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Two Pesos (PhP6,614,882.00) and equipment amounting to Three Million Two Hundred Ninety One Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Seven Pesos (Php3,291,927) for the Concreting/Rehab. of JNR Sitio Proper Agnaga-Sitio Belen Calamigan.

Bid documents may be purchased at the ARCP Local Project Office, Concepcion, Iloilo for a non-refundable fee of Php1,200.00 for each set on **March 22 & 23, 2004** from **8:00 a.m.** to **5:00 p.m.** Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at the Municipal Session Hall on **March 26, 2004** at **2:00 p.m.** Interested suppliers may obtain further information at the same address.

Offers or quotations shall be valid for a period of ninety (90) days after opening of quotations and must be accompanied by a bid security of two and one half (2-1/2%) percent of total quoted price, and shall be delivered to The Chairperson Pre/Post-qualification, Bids and Awards Committee, Municipality of Concepcion, Province of Iloilo on or before **April 12, 2004** at **2:00 p.m.**

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids which may found disadvantageous to the government.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) **Engr. Eva Mae V. Parreñas**
Chairperson
Pre/Post-qualification, Bids and Awards Committee
Municipality of Concepcion, Iloilo

(PDI–March 12 & 19, 2004)

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Day before publication

We lovingly remember
the birthday into eternal life
of our beloved
MOMMY,

TARCILA ESPINOSA CATACUTAN

January 24, 1914 – March 19, 2003

We, her children **Rey**, **Vivian**, **June**, **Malou**, **Pat Jr.** and **Manny**; in-laws, grandchildren and great grandchildren invite relatives, friends and the prayerful reader to pray for her eternal happiness with the Lord. Masses will be offered today, March 19, 2004 at the following churches:

San Sebastian Cathedral Parish Tarlac City, Tarlac	7:00 AM
Our Lady of Unity and Peace Parish United Parañaque 5, Sucat, Parañaque City	7:00 PM
St. Paul of the Cross Parish SSS Village, Marikina City	6:00 AM
St. Martin de Porres Parish United Parañaque 1, Parañaque City	6:00 AM
Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish Cleveland, Ohio USA	7:30 PM
Basilica del Espiritu Santo Parroquia de Guadalupe Buenos Aires, Argentina	11:30 AM
Sagrado Corazon de Jesus Parish Picun Leufu, Argentina	10:00 AM

In Loving Memory...
First Death Anniversary

Col Mariano Calvo Causin (GSC) PC

(July 29, 1919 - March 19, 2003)

His loving wife **Aurora**; brother **Florencio**; children **Sarah, Alda, Susan, Agnes, Delilah, Cesar** and the rest of the family request relatives, friends and all those lives he touched to remember him in their prayers.

Holy Masses will be offered at San Agustin Cathedral Church, Cagayan de Oro City - 6:00 a.m., St. Ignatius Chapel, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City - 7:30 a.m.

Kindly pray for the eternal repose of the soul of

Rev. Fr. Andrew A. Albia

December 30, 1969 - March 7, 2004

Parish Priest of St. Rose of Lima Parish
Anayan, Pili, Camarines Sur

"Now, Lord, you have kept your promise and you may let your servant go in peace."

I am the way, the truth
and the life. No one comes
to the Father except
through Me.
John 14:6

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

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GOLDJUNCTION CORPORATION
BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS

TO: ALL STOCKHOLDER ON RECORD

RE: Notice of Stockholder's Annual Meeting

The annual stockholder's meeting shall be held at the principal corporate address at 12 Robina St., Brgy. Bungad, San Francisco Del Monte, Quezon City, 3:00 o clock in the afternoon on april 03, 2004 (Saturday)

AGENDA
1 QUORUM
2 Election to the Board of Directors
3 Election of Corporate Executive Officers
4 Other matters
5 Adjournment

In Quezon City, Metro Manila, this February 03, 2004

(Sgd.) Ma. ROSARITO F. PIZARRO
O I C Secretary
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UN DP

INVITATION TO BID

Construction of Five (5) Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) for the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) under the "Community-Based Ecological Solid Waste Management System in the Philippines PHI/01/004"

The Development Support Services Center (DSSC) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would like to invite your company to bid for the construction of MRFs under the abovementioned project.

The project which is being executed by the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is aimed at expanding community-based solid waste management with an end in view of contributing to the achievement of the target of increasing the recycling level from 4% at the household level to at least 10% by the year 2010 which accords generally with the aims of the National Government's Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, RA 9003.

One of the components of the Solid Waste Management system is to establish in each project site a Materials Recovery Facility or MRF. The MRF will be used to receive, sort, process and store (until sold or processed into other materials) non-biodegradable recyclable materials.

In this regard, UNDP would need civil works contractors to construct five MRFs in five LGUs in each of the following sites: Brgy. Niugan, City of Malabon; Brgy. Vasra, Quezon City; Brgy. Pilar, Las Pinas; Brgy. Comembo, Makati City and Brgy. Tunasan, Muntinlupa.

The Bidding Documents (Eligibility Requirements, Instructions to Bidders and Terms of Reference), MRF Plan, Drawings and Building Specifications Outline may be secured, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Philippine Pesos One Thousand (PhP1,000.00)** from the following address:

Development Support Services Center
United Nations Development Programme
7th Floor NEDA sa Makati Building
106 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City (via courier)
Tel. No. (632) 892 0611 local 386
Fax No. (632) 816 4061/893 2610
Email address: bc_admin.ph@undp.org

Please be reminded that only Companies with PCAB (Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board) Principal Qualification and Classification of "Small B" are encouraged to apply.

The Bidding Documents shall contain all instructions on the rules, procedures, dates and other schedules for the pre-bid conference and opening of bid envelopes, as well as further details on the scope of services required.

The abovementioned document will be released to all interested parties strictly from **23-31 March 2004** only. The deadline for submission of the Technical and Financial proposals is on **20 April 2004**.

UNDP reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or informality therein, accept the bid and award the contract to the most advantageous offer to the UNDP based on UNDP criteria. UNDP assumes no obligation or responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred for the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made for this Contract.

(Sgd.) ETHELIND CAPUNO
Manager, DSSC

(PDI–March 19, 2004)

WOW! Caravan gets enthusiastic response

WITH BARELY a few days before launching day, a surge of interest has been reported from motorists wanting to join WOW! Pinoy Caravan '04. It's a motorcade that will go on a sightseeing tour of the entire country in 47 days. Launching day has been reset to March 23, 2004.

The caravan organizers have announced that signing up for the tour is still going on, but on a first-come-first-serve basis as the motorcade will be limited only to a hundred vehicles for better control and coordination.

The tour is designed to bring the motorists to the country's choicest tourist destinations. Island-hopping to Mindanao and back aboard Ro-Ro (roll on, roll off) ferryboats along the Philippine's "Nautical Highway". Organizers expect participants to enjoy big discounts in travel costs accruing from the benefits of group travel.

The caravan comprises three legs. The first leg goes island-hopping through Western Visayas all the way to Davao City. The second leg brings the motorcade back to Manila through Eastern Visayas and the Bicol Region, each leg spanning 14 days each. The last leg sweeps through Northern Luzon in 11 days. Participants may opt to join only a leg or two, or the whole tour.

The budgetary cost estimate for joining is only P800 per head per day, inclusive of registration fees, hotel accommodations, 3 meals a day and average gas or diesel consumption (Cost of ferry services depending on type of vehicles, fees for entrances and the use of facilities and amenities of tourist sites and destinations as may be required, and other miscellaneous expenses, are for the participant's account, since one of the notable features of the Caravan is its flexibility in terms of numerous options and choices of available activities). On the other hand, if one prefers to join prearranged rides by car, van, coaster or tourist bus, it would cost around P1,200 per head per day, including vehicle rental and ferry services. Pitching tent at stopovers, as an option, as well as budget meals would cost much less.

For more information call: 9271316; 9277611; 9286935; 9268072; 9209608; or text: 09163126418; or e-mail:info@wowpinoycaravan04.com or wowpinoycaravan04@yahoo.com; or visit www.wowpinoycaravan04.com.

Tax exemptions of non-profit firms and educational institutions

By Jose A. Osana
and Gorgonio B. Elarmo Jr.
SGV & Co.

TAX-FILES

TAX exemptions leads to revenue losses for the government, thus, exemptions are usually frowned upon. Even those that are non-stock and non-profit are not automatically given tax exemptions.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue, thus, issued Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 76-2003 to clarify the tax exemptions of non-stock, non-profit corporations and educational institutions.

A. Taxation of non-stock, non-profit corporations

Under Section 30 of the Tax Code, the following organizations are exempt from paying income tax:

1. Non-stock, non-profit labor, agricultural or horticultural organizations

2. Mutual savings banks with no capital stock represented by shares and cooperative banks without capital stock organized and operated for mutual purposes and without profit;

3. Beneficiary societies, orders or associations, which operate for the exclusive benefit of the members;

4. Cemetery companies owned and operated exclusively for the benefit of their members;

5. Non-profit corporations or associations organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, athletic, or cultural purposes, or for the rehabilitation of veterans;

6. Non-profit business leagues, chambers of commerce, or boards of trade;

7. Non-profit civic leagues or organizations that operate exclusively for the promotion of social welfare;

8. Non-stock and non-profit educational institutions;

9. Government educational institutions;

10. Farmers or other mutual typhoon or fire insurance companies, mutual ditch or irrigation companies, mutual or cooperative telephone companies, or similar organizations of local character, the income of which consists solely of assessments, dues, and fees collected from members used to meet expenses; and

11. Farmers, fruit growers, or similar associations organized and operated as a sales agent to market the products of their members.

However, these entities are subject to the corresponding internal revenue taxes imposed under the Tax Code on their income obtained from any of their properties, whether real or personal.

Any profit such as rental payments from their building/premises is also subject to tax, regardless of the disposition of the income.

This exception shows the legislative intent that the taxable income of non-profit, non-stock corporations should be treated as separate and distinct from their tax-exempt income for purposes of taxation.

The BIR, however, ruled that a non-stock, non-profit firm or institution's income from a single and isolated transaction that will be used for its main purpose will be tax exempt.

Under the BIR ruling, the Metropolitan Club Inc. (Metroclub), duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission as a non-stock, non-profit sports and recreational club, was declared tax-exempt under Section 30 of the Tax Code pursuant to BIR Ruling No. S30-011-2002 dated April 11, 2002.

Subsequently, Metroclub granted a group of property developers the option to purchase a portion of its 1.2-hectare compound in Makati City for the construction of a residential condominium building.

Metroclub will use the proceeds of the sale to renovate its clubhouse and upgrade the sports club's facilities. The sale was also expected to strengthen Metroclub's financial capability by providing adequate working capital to efficiently operate the club and service its debt.

The BIR held that Metroclub's income from the sale is not subject to income tax because the proceeds will be used exclusively for its main purposes as stated in its Articles of Incorporation. In addition, the sale is an isolated transaction that falls within the exemptions provided by Section 30 of the Tax Code.

The interest income of non-stock, non-profit corporations from currency bank deposits, other financial instruments and royalties derived locally are subject to the 20 percent final withholding tax.

However, interest income derived from a depository bank under the expanded foreign currency deposit system shall be subject to 7 1/2 percent final withholding tax.

These organizations shall also be considered a withholding agent for the government if they act as an employer and any of their employee receives compensation income subject to withholding tax.

They shall also act as withholding agents for the government if they make income payments to individuals or corporations subject to the withholding tax provided for in Section 57 of the Tax Code, also as implemented by RR 2-98.

While a non-stock , non-profit organization may be entitled to tax exemption under the Tax Code, the exemption will only cover taxes for which it is directly liable. These include the 10 percent value added tax.

In particular, their purchases of goods, properties or services from VAT-registered entities as well as importation of goods are subject to a 10-percent VAT.

However, if the sale, barter or exchange of goods or property or the service is an isolated transaction, then it is exempt from VAT.

B. Non-stock, non-profit educational institutions

RR 13-98 defines non-stock, non-profit educational institutions as those engaged in any of the following educational activities:

1. Granting of scholarships to deserving students and professional chairs for the enhancement of professional courses, and instructing or training of individuals either through formal and informal methods,

2. Upgrading of existing facilities to support the conduct of these activities.

The tax exemptions of non-stock, non-profit educational institutions are provided under Section 4(3) of the 1987 Constitution. These refer to internal revenue taxes imposed by the government on all revenue and assets used for educational purposes.

Pursuant to Section 109(m) of the Tax Code, private educational institutions shall be exempt from VAT provided they are accredited as such either by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports or by the Commission on Higher Education.

This VAT exemption does not extend to their other activities involving sale of goods and services.

However, private educational institutions are subject to internal revenue taxes on income from trade, business or other activity, the conduct of which is not related to the exercise or performance by such of their educational purposes or functions. (Section 2, Finance Department Order No. 137-87, as amended by Finance Department Order No. 92-88.) Non-related activities may include rental income for the lease of buildings/premises.

Unlike non-stock, non-profit corporations, their interest income from currency bank deposits and yield from deposit substitute instruments used exclusively for its main purposes are exempt from the 20-percent final tax and 7 1/2 percent tax on interest income under the expanded foreign currency deposit system imposed under Section 27 of the Tax Code, subject to certain conditions.

C. Common provisions

To monitor the activities conducted by non-stock, non-profit corporations and educational institutions, they should maintain their respective sets of books of accounts as prescribed in Section 235 of the Tax Code.

170-yr-old brand gets new look

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

THE ANNUAL stockholders meeting of Ayala Corp. is usually punctuated by a suggestion from a minority shareholder to rename Makati City into Ayala City—a testament to how the Ayala group has defined the hallmarks of the country's premier financial district.

But more than the residential and office buildings in Makati and elsewhere in the Philippines and the main road of the central business district, the name Ayala brings to mind attributes such as trust, stability and confidence., and dedicated service.

These are the same values that the Ayala group wants to capture and emphasize in its recently launched brand campaign, one of the main activities to mark the Ayala group's 170th year of doing business in the Philippines.

"We have long realized that one of the keys to our long-term success as a group has been the strength of our brand and the Ayala name. But within the framework of this broad branding concept, we felt that there was a need to re-examine Ayala's brand management system in a more strategic and scientific way to ensure that our brand name is used properly and that any visuals evoke the values we espouse," explains Ayala Corp. president Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala.

This is the Ayala group's first major campaign to strengthen its brand, which includes a new logo.

Retained was the icon created by Don Jaime's late uncle Fernando Zobel, who was one of the most progressive artists during his time. It consists of a stylized pair of blue double-line A's, interlocking at the center.

Within the blue color are four, straight white lines that suggest movement either pointing to or emanating from the core.

Ayala

THE GROUP'S new logo ...

AYALA CORPORATION

... a fresh take on an old icon

Added was the new word mark "Ayala" in warm color tone to make the brand more up to date.

To symbolize the brand promise of "pioneering the future," Ayala created a directional symbol, the "pioneering arrow" that it will use in all corporate and marketing communications materials. The arrow, derived from the Ayala icon, will serve to remind the public of Ayala's promise to continue shaping the future.

"The magnitude of our businesses, the challenges we live in, and the competitive environment we work in require us to periodically review the standing of our brand with our public. The decision to take this initiative stems from the need to look for ways to continually strengthen and nurture Ayala as an institutional brand name and to enhance the area of complementation with the powerful brands of our subsidiaries," the younger Zobel stated during the new brand's launch for Ayala officers and employees.

Jaza spearheaded the branding campaign last year. His mandate was to find a symbol for the Ayala group's brand promise and values; renew, inspire and nurture them across the Ayala group and all stakeholders.

The brand review involved all levels of the organization from Ayala group chair Jaime Zobel to the key executives who put their ideas together. Employees, on the other hand, figured in the focus group discussions. Lending a hand was Hong Kong-based Enterprise IG, which structured the brand review.

The first step of the process was to find a statement to capture what the Ayala group stands for. The group found it in the phrase "Pioneering the future." This phrase would now be present in all forms of corporate communication.

Brand values were defined as integrity, long-term vision, empowering leadership and commitment to national development. These are what the Ayala group believes as the defining features of the group.

Long-term vision, on the other hand, was what kept the Ayala group flourishing since two entrepreneurs established the group in 1834 when Manila was little more than a village.

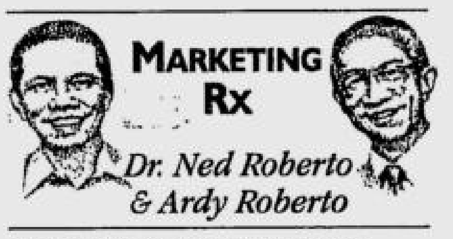
From the distillery business, the Ayala group has grown to be the market leader in almost all major industries from real estate, telecommunications, banking to water distribution.

Through its various foundations led by the Ayala foundation, it is involved in education, youth development, integrated community development, environment, technology and culture and arts.

And as a break from the past with an eye on the future, Zobel said that the group would no longer use its legal entity name Ayala Corp. except in legal documents.

"We will simply be known as Ayala," he said.

Ad and sales promotion: Which one to spend on?



Q: "We're marketing a supermarket canned product that's a minor contender brand in its category. We're talking to an ad agency who's recommending that we should have an A&P (advertising and promotions) budget. We've never advertised before and the only promotions we've done is in-store promotions like product demos using push girls in the category section of the supermarkets, and in-store product sampling. Our distributor has been in charge of these and has included them in their contracted services. According to our distributor we don't need yet advertising and sales promotion (both consumer and trade). On the other hand, an advertising seminar we attended said we must advertise or we'll never get big and that between advertising and sales promotion, our priority should be in favor of advertising. We're confused. Any suggestion to unconfused (sic) us?"—Confused canner

A: The first step to "unconfused" yourself is to start your diagnosis by being clear about the marketing role and functions of advertising, consumer and trade promotions, and in-store promotions.

These four marketing activities are called "marketing supports." They are also known as your product's "support Ps." As support, their role is essentially captured by their generic name, "promotion." That is, "pro" which means " in favor of," and "motion" referring to movement, specifically product movement. So promotion whether in the form of advertising, consumer promotion, trade promotion or in-store promotion, functions as an effort "in favor of product movement."

Communication and persuasion

Advertising does its promotion function by quickly communicating to the product's many target consumers and trying to persuade them about your product's distinctive benefits. Consumer promotion is meant to follow up on the obtained consumer persuasion and does its promotion job by providing a reason in the form of a product sample, a price-off, a contest, a buy-one-take-one-free offer or what have you, for the consumer to decide to buy now and not to postpone. Trade promotions like free goods, selling aids, bonuses and incentives, contests and prizes, do a similar promotion job: to give the retail trade a compelling reason to make your brand available and to push it with its shopping consumers NOW. Finally, in-store promotions like off-shelf display and merchandising, consumer in-store sampling, push girls and the like, make sure that the promotion function is brought to its targeted end-state by reminding consumers of their persuasion about buying your brand and preventing at point of purchase any interception by competitors of your target consumers' decision to buy your brand.

Product movement then is generally completed when all four marketing support inputs are in place and reinforce one another's promotion function. This means that you should have all four working together or you risk product movement. This is why we often hear things like:

"Don't advertise without sales promotion or your ad stays as a toothless pull without its needed push."

"When you run a sales promotion, advertise it or no one will know about it."

Exceptions to the rule

We qualified our conclusion in the preceding by saying "generally" because like all rules, there are exceptions. The most obvious exception is when one of the four support Ps can do all or two of the other three promo functions. This is what is happening to in-store promotion. Especially for small brands like yours with limited marketing support budget, in-store promo functions as an advertising, a consumer promo and a trade promo as well.

Are in-store promos delivering on this multi-tasking job? In a lot of cases it is surprisingly able to do so. Or it's at least able to deliver on two of the three.

When your brand is small and has limited distribution coverage, consumers come to know the brand via its presence in the retail stores where it is available. In that sense, your in-store promo materials are also doing an advertising job. When the same promo activity excites the retail store people, it's then also doing a trade promo job. And so on.

There are at least two factors responsible for enabling in-store promo to accomplish this multi-tasking work.

One is the evolving change in consumer buying decision process. Over the years, there has been a noticeable shift in the location of the consumer's final buying decision. A whole lot more of consumers are making their final purchase decision at point of purchase. That is, in-store even though this decision may still be initiated at home. The growing number of research into consumer in-store behavior that category management (among others) has been commissioning provides convincing evidence of the shift. It was the ethnographic research that anthropologist-turned-marketing consultant Paco Underhill documented in his best-selling book, "Why We Buy—The Science of Shopping," that triggered widespread interest in this long neglected type of consumer understanding research.

Rise of category management

The other factor is the rise in power of the retail stores over the entire marketing cycle. Retailers have come to realize that it is their hands that determine if the final stage in the transfer of products from supplier to consumer will take place. Manufacturers and marketers have come to recognize this too. In the process, category management practicing retailers saw how consumer purchase decisions can be intercepted and shifted to other brands inside the store.

All these registered as a shift in A&P (ad and promo) spending. Donnelly Marketing Inc.'s Annual Survey of Promotional Practice, for example, reported that as much as 58 percent of total US A&P spending go to trade promotions that include in-store promotions. Consumer promotions and advertising are tied at 21 percent each. Twenty years ago, advertising took in the major portion of A&P spending at 43 percent. But already, trade promotions even then had a slightly larger share over consumer promotion, 24 percent versus 23 percent. The growing dominance of trade promotion over consumer promo and advertising has become a reality in the Philippine market as well. Just ask Richard Lim of Demo Power and ACT Media. They're doing brisk business supplying mini TVs—or shopper stoppers—in the supermarket shelves that automatically play commercials when you pass by its clients' products.

Our prescription

The net takeout of the foregoing diagnosis is the following marketing Rx. If you're a small brand available almost solely in one retail outlet type like the supermarket, find out first if you belong to a product category where shopping consumers make their final purchase decision in-store. If they do, then set up your in-store promotion so that it's empowered to do not only the in-store promo job but the advertising, consumer promo and trade promo functions as well or at least two of these three. Your in-store promo should be designed to get supermarket shoppers aware of your brand and persuaded to buy it (and buy it now and not later) and to prevent competition from intercepting that decision to buy. It should also be designed to get the supermarket to give shelf placement to your brand, and to push it now, now, NOW and not later.

Feedback at MarketingRx@SaltandLightVentures.com. Or text us at 0919-314-5412.

Downside of celebrity endorsements

From page B16

Cuneta, Charlene Gonzales, Aga Muhlach, Heart Evangelista, Kris Aquino, Donita Rose, Luis Manzano, Bayani Agbayani, etc.

Financial risk. The use of a celebrity endorsement strategy must be weighed heavily on the basis of its cost effectiveness and specially, the endorser's fit to the brand.

Nike signed Michael Jordan to an initial $2.5 million contract over five years in the '80s but the Air Jordan line of sports shoes and apparel sold over $100 million in a single year averting any financial risk. Nike inked a contract with Tiger Woods for $100 million over five years. Nike waxes optimistic over the deal that had a fledging golf business, roughly estimated at one percent of gross Nike revenues, before Tiger Woods.

Last year, Nike signed 18-year old basketball whiz LeBron James to a seven- year contract estimated at $90 million. Nike has about the same time to prove its marketing decision right.

Next week: Upsides of celebrity endorsements.

The writer is a Marketing trainer/consultant teaching Marketing Management and Brand Management at the De La Salle Professional School's Graduate School of Business with email address at kdeasis@skyinet.net

Firm does a first: Drops drug cost

From page B16

a major public health problem in the Philippines—it is the number six leading cause of morbidity and mortality. Compliance is critical in TB treatment. Poor compliance leads to decrease in cure rate and increase in relapse rates. It also gives rise to increase of drug-resistant strains which can affect other people.

Salbutamol

Compared to metered dose inhalers which cost over P300 a pack, the ValueHealth Ventolin Rotacaps is a very affordable inhaled anti-asthma drug at P6.10 per unit pack. More than just affordability compared to orally-taken anti-asthma medication, the Rotacaps give faster relief for the patient wince inhaling the medicine delivers the needed medication directly to the lungs.

Allopurinol

For a patient with gout, a painful condition which needs to be controlled through a daily maintenance medicine, ValueHealth Zyloprim 300 mg will only cost a patient P520 a month compared to the old price of P595.

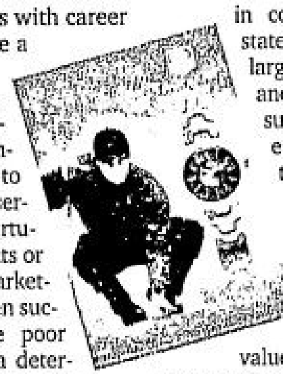
Isberto says GSK expects the other pharameutical companies to follow their strategy.

Although this will increase competition, it will at least make medicine more affordable to a wider market.

Downside of celebrity endorsements

By Karen V. de Asis
Contributor

THE FILIPINO *hoi polloi* has been labeled by many as exceedingly star-struck, enamored to high heavens by *artistas*. Not surprisingly, political tickets combine popular personalities with career politicians to achieve a halo effect.



Likewise, traditional marketers resort to celebrity endorsers in their bid to popularize lesser-known brands. Unfortunately, not all products or services with this marketing strategy have been successful. Among the poor performers include a detergent brand endorsed by a lady politician, who the market found incredulously hard to believe could even devote time to laundry.

Grant McCracken, author of the journal article, "Who Is The Celebrity Endorser?" states that celebrities are individuals who enjoy public recognition and who use this recognition in behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement. McCracken, who developed The Meaning Transfer Model, widely referred to in consumer researches, states that celebrities, due largely to their career and the roles they assume in movies, sports, etc. have developed their own individual identity, meaning and persona in the minds of their audience. It is these set of meanings that they bring as a value to the products and services they endorse. Celebrities own their meanings because they developed them over time through the course of their work and in full public view.

Locally, the more frequently used endorsers are entertainers, athletes, broadcast journalists and politicians. Ironically, many local brands do not conduct consumer research to validate celebrity appeal and fit to the product or service nor do they refer to any positioning or brand character statement. Most rely on gut feel, celebrity's present popular appeal and friends, family or agency recommendation.

Many will agree that the use of celebrities has their own downsides and upsides.

Academicians and industry practitioners point to the following risks when contracting celebrity endorsers:

Negative publicity. Brands strongly associated with celebrity endorsers who happen to be targets of highly unfavorable publicity are likely to risk losing their positive appeal and credibility fast. For example, the brand Hertz suffered in image ratings when its endorser for 20, O.J. Simpson was accused of murdering his ex-wife and her friend.

Extinction. This happens with long-term contracts. A celebrity endorser may be very popular at the beginning of the contract term but lose his appeal or fame over time while the contract is still active. For example, a young personality may be fit to endorse a perceived young brand in the beginning but as the endorser ages; the same celebrity may no longer have the same impact on the brand's young target market.

Overuse. Riding high on the successful use of an initial endorser, some marketers repeat the formula for no real significant reason except to prevent a competitor from using another new celebrity on the rise. Some simply allow the brand to be a launching vehicle for a perceived upcoming star. Others use different celebrities to endorse different product or service variants. Without a strong, cohesive reason or relationship in the use of multiple endorsers, the overall brand image is likely to suffer. The success of Nike's use of multiple endorsers lies in the brand's clear-cut positioning in athletics and fitness. Consumers find a perfect fit between Nike and the choice of endorsers among them the late Steve Prefontaine (marathon), John McEnroe (tennis), Joan Benoit (marathon), Michael Jordan (basketball), Tiger Woods (golf) and more recently, a roster of young athletes on the rise, Freddy Adu (soccer), Carmelo Anthony (basketball) and of course, LeBron James (basketball).

Overshadowing. On many occasions, earnest marketers capitalize too much on the celebrity's popular appeal neglecting their brand and message in the ad execution. Hence, overshadowing happens. Marketers are advised to wisely use celebrities by ensuring that the brand and celebrity remain to be equally strong elements in the advertisements.

Overexposure. Because of the financial implications of endorsements, celebrities are not wont to welcome other endorsement opportunities. This becomes a problem when a celebrity endorses brands simultaneously, leaving consumers to wonder whether the celebrity did the endorsement because he truly uses and believes in the product or is simply doing it for the talent fee.

An ACNielsen study revealed that locally, celebrities with the most number of endorsements include among others Sharon

DOWNSIDE/ B15

NOEL Isberto and Lito Tadena

Firm does a first: Drops drug cost

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

A FEW years ago, the Philippine management team of drug-maker GlaxoSmithKline, realized they had to address major issues affecting the pharmaceutical industry in the country.

One of these issues was that the Philippines is a country "with social needs" which means not everybody can afford even the most basic medicine. Another is competition from other players and the parallel market was getting stiff.

The team's answer was to make GSK medicine cheaper in the Philippines.

The proposal was not immediately approved by the head office in the UK as it was never done before. But after a few years, Dr. Russell Greig, president of GSK pharmaceutical international, gave the go.

Last January, the GSK Value-Health program was implemented in the Philippines. It makes available a range of essential medicines at more affordable prices. Prices of these medicines were brought down up to 34 percent.

GSK is the first global pharmaceutical company to address the need to sell lower-priced but quality drugs in the Philippines. GSK has annual sales of $26 billion and employs over 100,000 people worldwide. The firm was borne out of a merger by Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham in January 2001.

"Dr. Greig calls it an experiment. Others may follow," says Noel R. Isberto, VP for Corporate Affairs of GSK. Isberto worked closely with GSK head Lito Tadena to push for the program.

He says it is too early to assess the impact of the program in terms of sales but he adds that doctors "appreciate what we've done."

The program is geared to help the C, D, E, market.

"The gauge of the success of this program would be the sales," he adds.

Isberto reveals that the Filipino medicine shopper can be categorized into three—one third would go to the doctor when sick; a third would self-prescribe; and another third would flip-flop on whether to go or not.

He says the firm hopes to change this profile with the ValueHealth program, at least for the ailments that are meant to be addressed by the products under the program.

The price reduction covered five products under the ValueHealth program—Amoxil (amoxicillin); Rifamax (Rifampicin); Ventolin (Salbutamol) Rotacaps; Zyloprim (Allupurinol).

Isberto explains the five were chosen based on the medicine most needed by the masses.

Amoxicillin

A child with acute respiratory tract infection like pneumonia, would be prescribed amoxicillin 125 mg syrup with a typical seven-day treatment period. Before Value-Health Amoxil this could cost P658 at P94 per bottle. Under the program, cost would go down to P455 or savings of P203.

Department of Health Statistics in 1998 showed pneumonia is the third leading cause of mortality among Filipinos. Amoxil or amoxicillin is a very effective antibiotic against certain common bacteria including the ARI, which is the leading cause of mortality (death) in children below five years.

Together with co-trimoxazole, it is recommended by the World Health Organization.

Co-trimoxazole

An adult suffering from urinary tract infection could be prescribed co-trimoxazole tablet twice a day. The program reduced the price of Septrin to P10 per tablet from P14. 20, or a 30-percent savings.

Septrin is the cheapest antibiotic for the treatment of serious infections and also used for the treatment of gastrointestinal infections including cholera, typhoid fever, skin and soft tissue infections, pneumonia, UTI and other infections due to sensitive organs.

Diarrhea is the leading cause of morbidity (illness) in the Philippines, according to DOH in 2001.

Rifampicin

A 20 kg. child sick with tuberculosis will be prescribed 200 mg of Rifampicin per day. Under GSK's program, the child need only take one teaspoon a day because Rifamax is a double strength formulation thus enhancing treatment compliance.

Rifamax or Rifampicin is one of the most potent anti-TB agents. TB is

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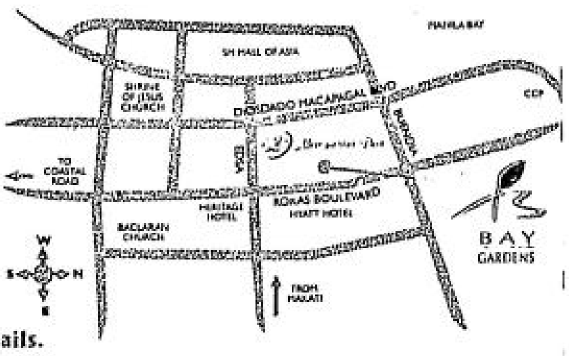

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Awards give 'Magnifico' second chance in box office

Movie to be re-issued next week

By Nini Valera

TOMORROW, Director Maryo J. de Los Reyes' "Magnifico" will have collected a total of 25 trophies from local award-giving bodies and foreign film festivals.

The movie about a young boy whose kindness and innocence survive the harshness of human nature and poverty will receive the Pasado Award for best picture, best director, best actor and best story from a group of academicians, according to Direk Maryo.

He admits that with "Magnifico," he has surpassed all his personal bests in the 25 years that he has been filmmaker.

"I get accolades for it everywhere I go," he told INQUIRER Entertainment last Tuesday. "Recently, I got a letter from the British ambassador in Manila asking where he could get a video copy of the movie."

Direk Maryo has also received offers from international film producers to submit his concepts for possible co-production ventures. But he has yet to accept a foreign movie offer and is now in the midst of preparation for a Manila Film Festival Entry.

"I would rather not say the title of the movie yet," he said.

The awards "Magnifico" has won abroad, especially the best picture award from the Kinderfest or children's portion of the Berlin Film Festival, and the honors bestowed upon it by the local award-giving bodies, the most recent of which was the Star Awards for movies last weekend, havė also ignited interest in the film among local audiences and have given it a second lease on life at the box office.

Madame Violett Sevilla, whose Violett Films produced the movie, told INQUIRER Entertainment last Tuesday that she would re-issue "Magnifico" in Metro Manila theaters on March 31.

"Finally, the movie is getting the audience it deserves," she enthused.

DIREK Maryo. With about 50 films in his credit in a career that spans more than two decades, he continues to earn accolades every where he goes for "Magnifico," which he considers an all-time career high.

She is also getting the motivation to produce another quality film even if she has yet to recover half of the P20 million she had spent to produce "Magnifico."

"It's a nice feeling when you're there among other producers from all over the world, listening to the Philippine national anthem being played, seeing the Philippine flag among the flags of other countries," Madame Violett said. "It's a good feeling that you get in your heart."

It is also good to hear offers from foreign film distributors for marketing deals for "Magnifico" in foreign markets.

"This time, it's the film distributors who are calling me up and waiting for me to sign their contracts," Madame Violett said. "I have not yet signed any contract, but I have a booker for Canada."

She has also held on to the video rights of the movie even if she had already sold the cable and television rights of the film to ABS-CBN. "I am being careful about the video rights," she said, "because that would risk piracy of the movie."

Bootlet copies of the film starring 9-year-old Jiro Maño in the title role are now being sold in the usual outlets for pirated movies. But Madame Violett is still being extra vigilant in protecting "Magnifico" from piracy.

The irony of the movie being rejected as an entry in the 2002 Metro Manila Film Festival is also not lost on Madame Violett, who has produced only two movies, but is bent on coming out with more quality, children-oriented films in the near future.

"I don't know why the movie was not chosen to be an entry that year," she said. "Each person has his own taste. Maybe, the selection committee of the MMFF did not like the movie's theme of death. But it is now a finalist in this year's FAMAS."

There is still the Gawad Urian, the most prestigious film award, sometime in the middle of this year.

So far, "Magnifico" has competed last year in the Montreal World film Festival, Pusan Film Festival in Korea, Hawaii International Film Festival, Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in Czechoslovakia, and the Fukuoka International Film Festival, Japan.

Madame Violett reveals that she will be entering "Magnifico" in other foreign film festivals even if she has to spend money to send her director, actor and herself to these festivals.

"I cannot stop now that 'Magnifico' is making headways abroad," she reasoned. "Call it an investment on something good. I believe it's worth it."

What else can "Magnifico" win?

"The public's attention," said Madame Violett. "The movie deserves a good audience. When it is re-issued, I hope the audience would be there to watch it. Seeing a full house is the best motivation any producer can have in making more quality films. I do not want 'Magnifico' to be my last good movie. I intend to make some more good films."

At the back of her mind, Madame Violett admits, is the investment that she still has to recover.

"Of course, it's still there. This is still a business. But I believe that the audience is an intelligent one and can no longer be deceived into watching mediocre films. I am here to offer them a quality alternative."

The TV news as 'telenovela' and sitcom

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE CURRENT preference for "the drama behind the news" has gotten out of hand. The crime news section of many nightly newscasts now features stories that are an unwieldy combination of fact and melodramatic embellishment and highlighting that has given birth to a new TV program form that we can call "telenovela news."

Many of these news items take place in police precincts or *barangay* outposts, where domestic crimes are brought to the attention of cops or *tanod*.

Instances include: a battered wife complaining loudly, tearfully and bitterly against her monster of a husband. A mother beaten up by her own son for constantly serving *tuyo* for dinner. An adolescent girl charging her *grandfather* with serial rapes. And a GRO haling a lovelorn customer to the precinct for not paying his bill.

What makes these cases different from the usual crime stories on TV newscasts is the perceptible effort to milk those situations for scandal, emotion, shock value and artificially quotable quotes that variously irritate and delight viewers at home, who behave like they were watching an over-the-top TV soap.

We get the feeling that both the victims and accused are being prompted to come up with melodramatic reactions and quotable dialogue. TV field reporters appear to egg them on with leading questions that provoke them to "perform" in a *kwela* manner for the peanut gallery.

For instance, the battered wife is prompted to exclaim, *"Ayoko na, gabi-gabi ginagawa niya akong* punching bag!"

And the battered mother bitterly says of her complaining son, *"Masyado yang pihikan sa pagkain—wala namang perang pambili ng masarap, akala mo kung sino!"* Whereupon the craven lad retorts, *"A, basta, ayoko ng tuyo—gusto kong kainin, baboy, baka, manok at bangus!"*

This prompts the insulted mother to push her son away, and to file a case of battery against him—which in turn leads to the victimizer finally realizing that his goose is cooked, so he mewls pathetically as he kneels on the floor, begging for his *mater*'s forgiveness.

Of course, the battered mom refuses to be moved, so her son is thrown into a cell as the TV audience laughs and cheers—*buti nga sa kanya!*

Last Sunday, the most melodramatic—and at the same time comical—news item was about a love-besotted man who couldn't pay his bill at a beer garden. The fact that he wasn't exactly handsome only added to the perverse appeal of the item: he loved the sexy GRO, but couldn't afford her, so he was deemed to be a pathetic loser, both coming and going.

To make things even more "entertaining," the field reporter at the precinct prompted him with questions like, *"Kung mahal mo siya, anong balak mo, liligawan mo?"*

When the impoverished swain said yes, the reporter scoffed, *"E, papano mo liligawan, wala ka namang pera?"* Not to be outdone, the accused bravely exclaimed, *"Gagawa ako ng paraan!*—I love you, I love you, I love you!"—Bad acting and prompting all around!

As for the GRO, she too was prompted with: *"O, ano, sasagutin mo ba siya?"* To which, she of course exclaimed, *"Ay, naku, lahat ng lalaki, manloloko!"* And the reporter just as predictable riposted, "—*Hindi naman lahat!"*

Meanwhile, the news value of the item was thoroughly upstaged by the *telenovela*—and even sitcom—nature of the "show biz" way it was handled.—Not that anybody seemed to care.

But, the point is: we should care, because a newscast should be as objective as possible, so viewers can make an informed judgment about the significance of the news events of the day. Fun's fun, but leave it to the entertainment programs, where it belongs.

'Wisegirls'

IN HER latest starrer, "Wisegirls," **Mira Sorvino** plays Meg, a waitress in an Italian restaurant run by the mob. Her waitress friends Raychel and Kate, are portrayed by **Mariah Carey** and **Melora Walters**, respectively.

The restaurant is frequented by "wiseguys" and serves as a front for drug dealers. The three waitresses work hard to survive in male-dominated criminal world, desperately and creatively try to make their dreams a reality.

'Underneath the Stars'

KUH LEDESMA is mounting a unique concert on April 3 at her weekend retreat in Tagaytay. Titled "Hacienda Isabella: Underneath the Stars," the special features Kuh, her daughter **Isabella** and new talent **Rebekah**.

Isabella, who is studying painting in the States, will also exhibit her artworks in the hacienda's garden. Call 551-7252.

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MORTENSEN

Omar . . .

From page C4

pretty girls, I was afraid that I was going to fall in love with some starlet with big boobs or something. Since I didn't want to leave her for another woman because I thought it was too insulting and too demeaning, I divorced her for no reason at all. I wanted to give her a chance with another man. I didn't want her to be old by the time I left her and not give her a chance."

He admits that she was the only woman he ever loved.

"I don't think I ever loved my other girlfriends because when we parted, I didn't feel any pain and I believe that if you really care for that person, there would be pain when you part."

His former wife has a very happy life now, says Sharif.

"At least, I succeeded in that part."

Sharif stayed single after his divorce. Without hesitation, he confesses that he always falls in love with his leading ladies.

"Of course, I do!" he blurts out. "I fall in love with every one of them! Seriously, I thought I was (in love). Because it's so hard to be working for two or three months with a beautiful woman with talent and all that, working from nine to five with her, and not fall in love. And then you end the night with 'I love you' and all that. I can't help but carry some of that love with me home.

"I have given up women now. I have decided not to be enslaved by any passion at all and that includes women. My only passions these days are horses and my work. I love my horses. Every time I have some money, I buy a horse. I could have bought houses or other more useful things but I just can't say no to horses."

More cultured

He gave up women because "I realized that if I gave up women, I could finish reading a chapter from a book. And if I read more books, I can be more cultured."

His debts, says Sharif, has kept him from accepting film roles.

"The worst thing is when I make a lousy film and I still don't make enough money to pay my debts!"

Retirement is still far from his mind.

"I have just decided not to make lousy films anymore because my grandchildren (he has two from his son) have started to make fun of my films.

"They say, 'Grandfather, the last one was terrible but this one is ridiculous!' I want to keep some dignity in front of my family."

A movie that will make you laugh, cringe, or cry

By Ruben M. Cruz Jr.
Contributor

REVIEW

I WON'T beat around the bush. I loved this movie. If you want a sure cure for the blues, you should see it too. It would take a heart of stone to resist it.

I am not easily taken by romance movies, at least, not anymore. Which is why I can't help but be a little bit cynical about a movie with the title, "Love Actually," which, in its print ads runs a tagline that goes, "Somewhere in this movie you would find the love of your life."

Stimulating, confusing

But this movie by British writer and first-time director Richard Curtis cut through my preconceived cynicism with its unshakeable sincerity and its intimate communication of the dynamics of human relationships. Once again Curtis, who wrote "Four Weddings and a Funeral," "Notting Hill" and "Bridget Jones' Diary" (critically and commercially considered as standouts in the romantic comedy genre) has distinguished himself as that rare filmmaker who can turn seemingly conventional material into something utterly enjoyable. You cannot help but be carried along by this movie's wit, energy and surprising sweetness.

Audiences lobotomized by one-level stories may find "Love Actually" stimulating and confusing at the same time. The plot, which centers loosely around one sprawling, extended family of relatives, friends and mere acquaintances, is quite complicated because there are so many characters whose individual fates are somehow intertwined. For most of the movie, however, Curtis makes effective use of his ensemble cast (I counted more than 20 of them) and only near the end does the crowd of people vying for screen time turn into a detriment.

Inappropriate romances

Curtis's favorite actor, the ever-charming Hugh Grant plays the newly-elected British Prime Minister, a bachelor, who on his first day at 10 Downing Street falls in love at first sight with Natalie, a member of his official household staff (played by Martine McCutcheon).

Stealing a glance at Natalie, Grant sighs to himself disbelievingly, "Oh no, that is so inconvenient." He's completely aware of the futility of pursuing probably the most unwise and the most inappropriate of romances.

Another love that has to leap across the barriers of wealth, title and class is that of Colin Firth's Jamie, a writer who chances upon his wife and brother playing not-so-innocent house together. He seeks refuge in his cottage in France and there his despair is recycled into another fresh start with a Portuguese cleaning lady. Each of them does not understand a single word the other speaks; yet somehow that makes the poetry between them all the more beguiling.

There's a quiet and quirky realism in the development of these romances that makes me an all too willing dreamer in love with such fantasy. You tell yourself that if these things can happen in real life (and they, in fact, do occasionally) they might as well happen like this.

Besotted romantic

In any case, there are other stories in the movie whose connections to reality are not so tenuous.

There's Liam Neeson, for instance, playing a man who has just lost the love of his life. Thinking that his 11-year-old stepson (Thomas Sangster) must also be grieving because of the loss of his mother, Neeson is surprised to find out that the boy is actually a besotted romantic, who's distressed because he remains invisible to the girl he's in love with.

There's the conviction that love can inspire even when it's lost, that it's possible to make the experience mean something in your life, which is depicted in the story of a man who loves the wife of his best friend, but only from a distance.

There's Laura Linney's character who's finally able to bridge that aura of distant unattainability she shares with a co-worker only to succumb to the pressures of another kind of love.

Anthology

There's Alan Rickman's married man being wooed by a younger co-worker. The office crush perhaps provides that little touchstone of reverie that gets him through mundane workdays. It's an all too common tale, that just the idea that someone is in love with us is enough to spark a passion. It's probably closer to the truth than most of us would like to think. Romance sometimes is the illusion we never want to acknowledge it is. But this illusion can also have the most painful consequences, and you've got to see Rickman's wife in the movie, Emma Thompson, crying over Joni Mitchell's "Both Sides Now" to see what I mean.

There are more people in this cheerful and not-so-cheerful survey of the business of love, each of them you'd like to get to know better. Like the fading rock star played by scene-stealer Billy Nighy who's got only his manager on his side because, as he says, "When I was young, I was greedy and foolish, and so now I'm left with no one, wrinkled and alone." Or the couple who engages in the average getting-to-know you talk while they do some slightly off-kilter body doubling for movie stars.

Was it a movie or an anthology I saw? I didn't care. I also didn't know whether to laugh, cringe or cry during the course of "Love Actually" (I ended up doing all three). It's not necessary to know why. Like love itself, this is a movie that should be experienced and savored, not analyzed and picked over. Like love itself, it's wistful and hopeful and will probably leave you wearing a knowing smile on your face.

GRANT. Completely aware of the futility of pursuing the most inappropriate of romances

NEESON and Sangster (right) in a story whose connections to reality are not so tenuous

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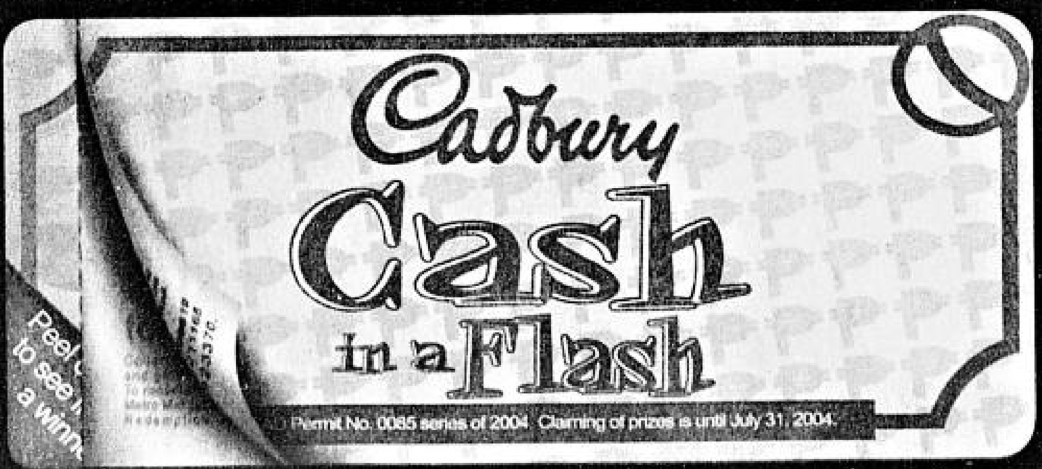
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Omar Sharif gives up women for horses

By Janet Susan R. Nepales
LA Correspondent

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LOS ANGELES—At 72, legendary Omar Sharif remains dashing, his soulful eyes still smoldering.

The former Egyptian matinee idol-turned-international star who won the hearts of women from all over the world stays charming, witty and engagingly candid.

Dressed sharply in a blue jacket and long-sleeved shirt, the dapper, silver-haired award-winning star of such unforgettable films as "Lawrence of Arabia," "Doctor Zhivago," "Funny Girl," and its sequel, "Funny Lady," he is talking about Buena Vista Pictures' "Hidalgo," where he stars as Sheik Riyadh together with "Lord of the Rings" star, Viggo Mortensen (as Frank T. Hopkins).

Set in the 1890s, "Hidalgo," which is based on the true story of one of the greatest long-distance riders, Frank T. Hopkins, tells of the exploits of Hopkins and his plucky mustang, Hidalgo, as they join the grueling 3,000-mile "Ocean of Fire" horse race against the world's finest Arabian horses.

Arab caricature

"I was in Paris working on another movie ('Monsieur Ibrahim') when I was offered this part—the first good part in a major studio film that I'd been offered in a long time. Although I was in the middle of the other film, I' m glad we found a way to make it work. I've enjoyed making this film, working with Viggo and (director) Joe (Johnston)," he discloses.

He admits that he did this film "because it is the first movie that I've done that doesn't have a caricature of an Arab. My character, Sheik Riyadh, for instance, loves his daughter so much, which is a good quality. Usually, the Arab sheik is shown as loving only his son and promising his daughter to someone to marry her off. The sheik I portray here is caring about his daughter and her feelings. These are just some of the things that they don't usually show in an Arab character."

Sharif, who speaks six languages fluently, recently won the Best Actor award at the Cesar Awards, the French version of the Oscars, for his performance as a Turkish shopkeeper in, "Monsieur Ibrahim et Les Fleurs Du Koran," which was nominated for best foreign film at the last Golden Globe Awards.

"I hadn't worked since 1996 because I was being offered some lousy roles," he confesses. "When I got 'Monsieur Ibrahim' and then 'Hidalgo,' I decided to work again."

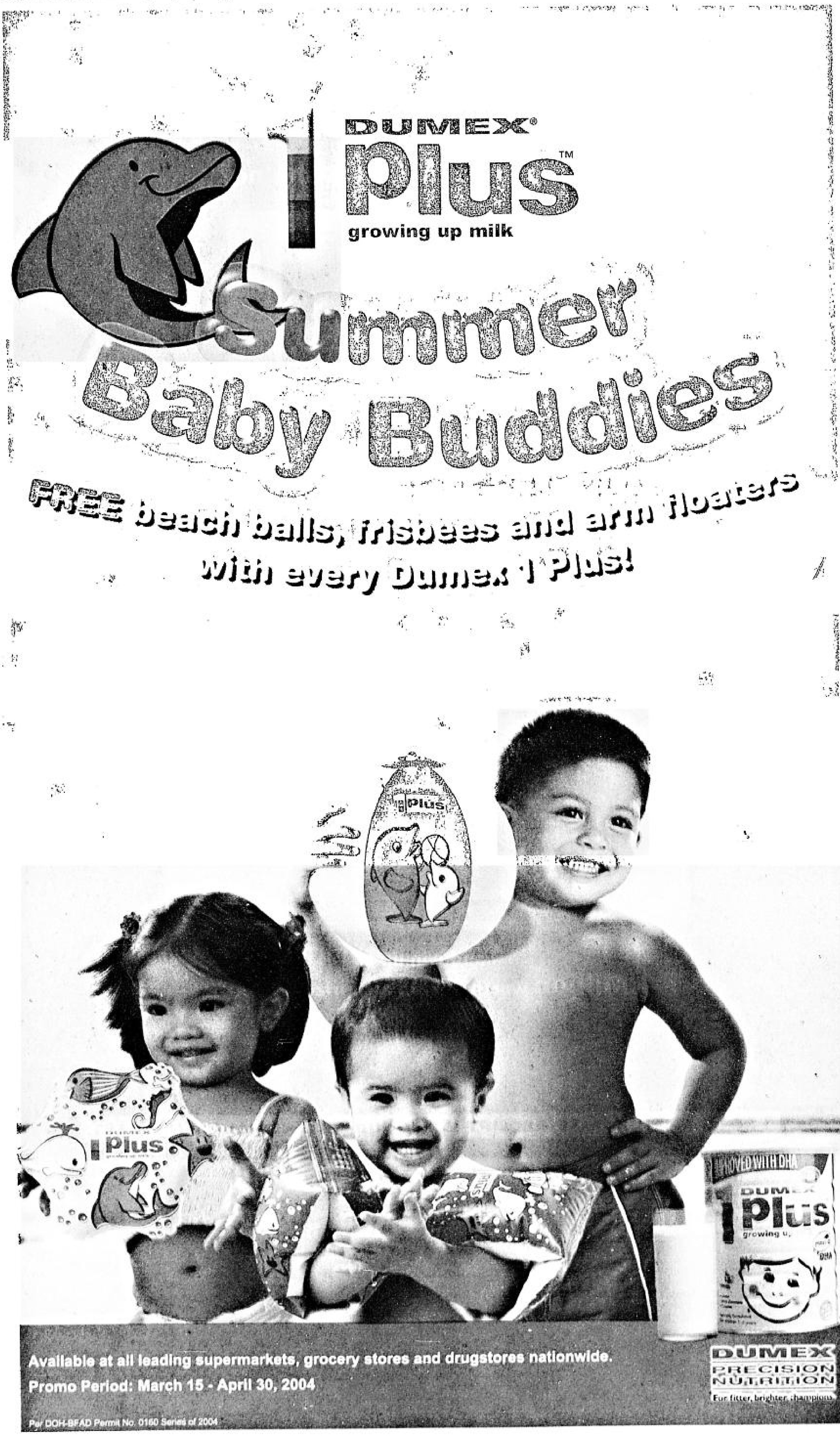
Staying single

Born in Alexandria, Egypt to a wealthy Egyptian-Lebanese family, Sharif was married for 15 years to a popular Egyptian actress, Faten Hamama, who he met when they did "Sina Fil Wadi" or "The Blazing Sun" together.

He confesses that he divorced his wife "for no reason at all. I never cheated on her. But when I came to Hollywood and I saw all these

OMAR/ C2

SHARIF, with Mortensen (right), still charming, witty and engagingly candid at 72.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CARING FOR YOUR TODDLER THIS SUMMER

Planning a family summer outing? Here are some tips you need to ensure that you and your toddler gets the most out of summer.

Fun at the pool

You can bring your toddler to the beach or pool for some fun in the water where he can hold his head up steadily. Bring along his favorite inflatable toys. The new experiences at the pool will further enhance his psychomotor development.

Watching and Feeling Nature

Go and let your toddler feel different textures such as the sand, the grass, the leaves and the stones. Pick out some shells for your toddler to explore and appreciate. Watch the life around you, your toddler will love studying ants crawling and little fishes swimming.

Roll and Toss a Ball

Balls are always fun to bring in the pool or on the beach. Bring an inflatable one so it will float and you can roll and toss it even when in the water. It will be fun for you and your toddler to play catch too. Maximize this bonding moment even in the heat of the sun.

Nutrition During Summer

Remember, that even when at the beach or while enjoying your summer getaway, your toddler will still need the best nutrition to keep him fitter and brighter. Prepare a cold glass of Dumex 1Plus for a complete and balanced nutrition. Dumex is the only growing-up milk formula with Maxi-Q plus DHA. Maxi-Q plus DHA is a system of nutrients that provides maximum brain and physical development of kids 1-3 years old.

A well-balanced, nourishing diet is still the best way to make your toddler a champion!

SUITABLY FIT ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR CHILD

The type of activities is determined primarily by your child's age, maturity and readiness to participate. Once your child starts walking, encourage him to stretch his body to jump, climb and run. However, you should first of all encourage your child to experience a variety of activities that focus on the development of basic movement skills such as running, balancing, jumping, kicking, throwing and catching.

And until your child is at least six, she may not yet be ready for the stress of structured sports activities. As your child matures and refines his skills, he will progressively learn more complicated skills and participate in more intense physical activities.

Do not let your choice of physical activities for your child be limited only to organized team sports or games. There is much more to these. The array of activities include those as simple as walking or hiking or it could also include those requiring a combination of complex skills and movements such as dancing and martial arts.

The following are recommended activities suitable for your child age:

The Toddler Period (1 to 3 years):

Focus on the activities that include movements which encourage the development phase (from crawling, standing then walking). Examples are ball kicking, swinging activities and physical activities that incorporate musical and rhythm instruments such as unstructured dance movements.

Because of their short attention span, make sure that activities are short, changed frequently and captivating.

The Preschooler Period (3 to 6 years):

Focus on activities that develop muscle strength and co-ordination such as tricycle cycling, swimming, roller skating, riding toys, skipping, hopping and throwing ball.

Encourage participation in activities with other members of the family such as short running, dancing and going for walks.

The School-Age Period (6 to 12 years):

Focus on refining skill development (e.g. hand-eye co-ordination, balance and rhythm).

Encourage participation on team sports that interest your child

ADv I

Stale glitter at the Star Awards /J2

LIFESTYLE

For feedback, text us at (0919)880-33-54
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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

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INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

Coach class

Creative director Reed Krakoff talks about how the American leather goods company lives up to its classic-with-a-twist image

SOHO Twill Stripe Small Top Handle has multi-stripe exterior with vermillion lining, Vachetta trim with daisy whimsical hangtag

REED Krakoff

By Kitty Go
Contributor

AS MUCH as I believe that fashion should be for everyone, I have to admit that I am a fashion snob. I don't do ubiquitous luxury designer nor do I do mid-priced "bridge" lines like Banana Republic or Macy's private label.

I try to fill my closet with lesser known yet stylishly unidentifiable (but not necessarily more expensive) pieces. However, I have made an exception with the leather goods line Coach, which in the last few years has experienced resurgence not unlike Gucci in the '90s. Certainly I am allowed a mind as fickle as the business I am in.

SOHO Twill Applique Small Hobo, the perfect summer bag, bursts with bright flowers and butterflies on white denim.

Now and then

I have seen the Coach line in the last few years countless times in my travels. I gave it a second look as a stylish accessory on other people, and found myself scrutinizing selections in their shops. The pieces indeed hold up in design and function compared to more expensive designer brands.

A stampede of fashionistas and celebrity fans, many of whom would never let anything cheaper than Bottega Veneta come between their Dr. Murad-exfoliated upper arms and their La Perla-slung chests, have surprisingly made Coach a visible part of their wardrobe.

As Reed Krakoff, president and executive creative director told New York Magazine years ago, "There's only so long people can say to you, 'Wow, it looks good—for Coach.'"

Today's Coach has lived up to this statement, and the Prada-and-Saint Laurent-clad brigade has completely forgotten the former dowdy image of this 65-year-old label. If they even knew it existed.

For a long time, Coach, a Preppy Handbook

COACH/D3

LEATHER Turnlock Satchel, a classic look updated with buckle detailing, will be available this April only at Greenbelt 4.

SIGNATURE Field Bag with cross-body style, adjustable strap, bright leather trim and butterfly

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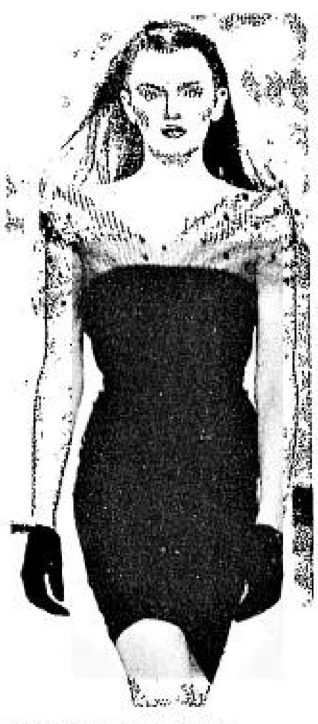
Slinky dresses and sexy gender-benders for winter

JULIEN Macdonald AFP



MARC Jacobs for Louis Vuitton REUTERS

SLINKY satin and velvet, topped with rhinestone jewels and strips of fur, made a comeback at the recent Paris winter fashion week.

Designers came out with vintage looks, such as flapper girls (Nina Ricci and Lanvin), 1940s elegance (Stella McCartney), Audrey Hepburn clones (Givenchy and Celine) and Marlene Dietrich diva reinventions (Valentino and Sonia Rykiel).

During the jam-packed week of more than 100 catwalk shows, other trends that emerged included sexy gender-bending clothes, the reinvention of fitted tweed overcoats and the return of the carefree, bohemian spirit.

AFP

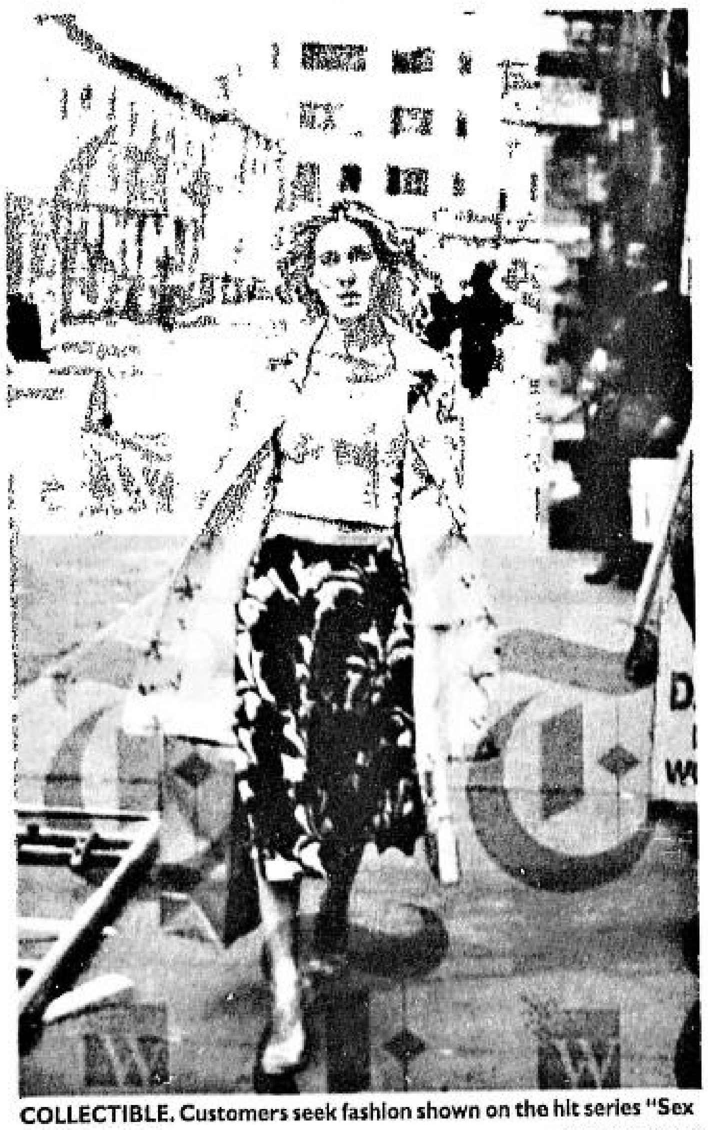
SONIA RYKIEL

SONIA Rykiel AFP

Designs kept for posterity (and maybe later, cash)

Collecting fashion is no longer just for women with caviar tastes and a connoisseur's eye

TOM Ford and the house of Yves Saint Laurent parted ways very recently. So Ford joined a handful of other designers—Michael Kors of Celine among them—who seemed to take their cues from Carrie Bradshaw in the finale of "Sex and the City," bidding Paris a bittersweet adieu. Leaving the fashion houses their names are linked to may leave their future uncertain, but one thing is sure: Their exit will ratchet up the value of their past designs, retailers say, ensuring their status as collectibles.



COLLECTIBLE. Customers seek fashion shown on the hit series "Sex and the City" THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Count on it," said Rita Watnick, the owner of Lily et Cie, a Los Angeles vintage fashion shop whose clients include Renée Zellweger and Demi Moore.

Such designs, she said, are almost sure to find their way onto the most-wanted lists of fashion followers. High on her own wish list, Watnick said, are "superior pieces from any designer's farewell collection," and, for that matter, outstanding items from his past collections, especially those that have been undervalued or overlooked.

"My advice is, look where everybody else isn't looking," Watnick said. A case in point is a flamenco-inspired red tulle couture evening dress designed for Givenchy by Julien Macdonald, who is expected to sever his ties with that fashion house this month.

Like art

Hoarding contemporary fashions with an eye to their future value is catching on among style-savvy consumers—some of them fashion professionals, others just passionate shoppers.

"More and more people are understanding that you can collect fashion the way you collect china or silver," said David Wolfe, the creative director of the Doneger Group, which forecasts fashion trends.

"At a time when fashion is beginning to be taken seriously as an art form, it is being seriously collected."

Only a decade ago, collecting fashion in this way was largely the pursuit of a handful of women with caviar tastes and a connoisseur's eye.

"Most of them were wealthy women who adored fashion and bought really extravagant pieces just because they loved them," said Clair Watson, the director of costume and textiles at the auction house Doyle New York.

In contrast, "today, the notion that you invest in something to get a return is just becoming part and parcel of a sophisticated shopper," Watson said.

No need to tell Tiffany Dubin, the owner of Lair, a vintage boutique at Henri Bendel in New York. Dubin, a stylishly dressed woman-about-town who used to oversee the fashion department of Sotheby's, routinely puts her money on items that register on her "cool radar," she said. "Often they are the signature pieces from a collection—those that reflect the time that we are in and at the same time anticipate a trend that is about to hit." As an example she cited a black and white houndstooth suit by Yohji Yamamoto from the designer's Fall 2003 collection, its price about $2,000.

A GUCCI ad for Tom Ford's signature white jersey dress with cutouts at the hips, a popular item for collectors. THE NEW YORK TIMES

Other designs that merit her attention heralded a turning point in fashion. Paramount to Dubin were Tom Ford's feathered jeans of Fall 1999, with a $5,000 price tag.

Similarly, Watson of Doyle trains her eye on those runway designs distinguished not just by their rarity and fine workmanship but also because in some way, Watson said, "they helped to shape the times that we are in."

To experts like Watson, the value of a modern design is determined by an amalgam of factors, including its individuality, the quality of its fabric and embellishment, and, most important, whether it represents a designer at the top of his form. Based on those standards, she gives high marks to "anything right now by John Galliano, especially the contour-clinging, tattoo-patterned evening dresses from Fall 2003," Watson said.

Provenance

Another gauge of a design's investment value is its provenance. A design from a house with history, especially one from a designer's final collection, is almost certain to soar in worth.

"If I were a collector, I would have made sure to get a couple of pieces from Jil Sander's farewell collection, as well as from her return collection this year," Wolfe said, "and it goes without saying, key items from Tom Ford's final collection for Gucci and Yves Saint Laurent."

Six months ago, news of Ford's imminent exit from Gucci sparked a run on the signature pieces from his watershed collections, especially that of Fall 1996, memorable for a procession of Halstonesque white jersey evening dresses with geometric cutouts at the hips.

"Last Fall I began getting calls for anything by Gucci," recalled Irene Albright, of Albright Inc., a New York fashion rental service. "Just the thought of Tom leaving was enough to start a feeding frenzy," Albright said.

"What people wanted more than anything was that white jersey dress with a big gold belt. Would it fit them? No one cared. They would buy it, whatever its size and condition."

She has been offered as much as $5,000 for that dress, Albright said, "but I think I'm going to hang on to it."

Albright has also fielded requests for shoes by Manolo Blahnik, "no matter the color or size, as long as someone wore the same shoe on 'Sex and the City.'" Customers, she said, are willing to pay a premium for any item that appeared on the program.

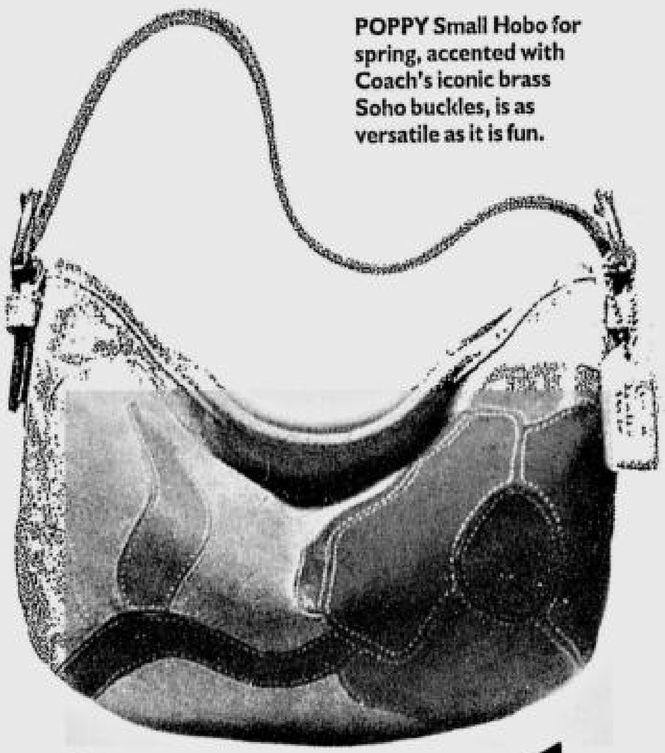
"The show became a cult. It was all about fashion." Most sought after was a gauzy ballerina skirt worn early in the series by Sarah Jessica Parker and reprised by her on the final episode on Feb. 22.

The pieces most likely to become financial assets are sometimes the ones so "outrageous and expensive that no one is going to wear them," Ina added, citing eyebrow-raising designs like Rei Kawakubo's bulbous padded gingham designs for Comme des Garcons in 1996.

"We call them press pieces," Ina said, meant to be photographed but not worn with their stuffing in place.

Wearability, though, is no criterion for a true aficionado. "Most people who collect such things never intended to actually put them on," said Watson, the curator. But whether one goes clubbing in them or fastidiously stores them in tissue, the thing to remember, Watson exhorted, is to "keep the label in."

NYT



POPPY Small Hobo for spring, accented with Coach's iconic brass Soho buckles, is as versatile as it is fun.

Coach class

From page D1

must-have, was associated with a tanned bucket bag (seen in the '70s movie "Love Story") or a matronly flap purse. Then there was the (too) visible Coach embossed leather tag of questionable style status attached to every product.

But thanks to Reed Krakoff, who is credited for the brand's new international success, Coach's image started to change in the late '90s first with its merchandise, which today epitomizes "classic with a twist."

The introduction of the best-selling Hamptons tote and canvas double Cs, the company's answer to the logo craze which took two years to perfect, took off phenomenally. This new look was complemented by stylish, aspirational and memorable print advertising shots primarily in the Hamptons by Mario Testino, Peter Lindbergh and Mikael Jansson.

Asian market

In an exclusive interview with the INQUIRER, Krakoff explains the success of Coach: "(It) is positioned globally as an accessible luxury accessories brand, offering aspirational products at an excellent value. The Coach brand exemplifies American style with fashionable and fun products that are high-quality, durable and chic."

SOHO Striped Crusher with delicate bow detail

He finds Asian customers very fashion forward and understands their attraction to exclusivity. "They purchase bold colors, innovative designs and fabrications," he observes. "In addition, the Asian customer is excited by Coach's exclusive collections that can only be purchased in international markets."

Coach is expected to gross $1.1 billion this year, and part of Coach's aggressive global expansion plan is a new boutique in Ayala's luxury mall, Greenbelt 4.

Still, as Krakoff says, "It is innovation rather than expansion of our selection that will be the key driver to the business."

And as much as the popularity of their shoes and clothing has reached waiting-list proportions, he remains cautious. "We are not planning to increase the size of the apparel or footwear offering," he says.

Enduring American style

Krakoff is known to throw things away and start afresh, yet despite the creation of a new line every season where he challenges himself to create new designs that will appeal to the growing number of Coach customers, there is one thing he does not change, and it is quality.

"Whether it's a piece of luggage, a handbag or a wallet, craftsmanship and functionality are essential," he says. "Some of the things to look for in well-made accessories are the quality of the leather, the stitching and the lining."

All over the world, the Coach Signature Collection is a best-seller, but being a proponent of change, Krakoff regularly modifies colors, designs and fabrics.

For this spring, he has evolved this collection into the Signature Floral Collection. He highly recommends getting your La Mer moisturized hands on the Limited Edition Coach Poppy Collection, which he describes as "captur(ing) the spirit of the season with bright, vibrant suede and leather flowers, intricately assembled, creat(ing) a collection that bursts with color and graphic style."

There are also two new silhouettes worth a purchase: the top handle and turnlock satchels.

A large part of enduring fashion is just the right blend of quality and style, exclusivity and value for money which Krakoff sees as the embodiment of Coach.

"We seek to be the leading brand of quality lifestyle accessories offering classic, modern American styling," he says. "We constantly challenge ourselves to be the very best we can in every aspect of our business. The Coach brand represents a unique synthesis of magic and logic that stands for quality, authenticity, value and a truly aspirational, distinctive American style."

E-mail the author at kittygo_pdi@yahoo.com.

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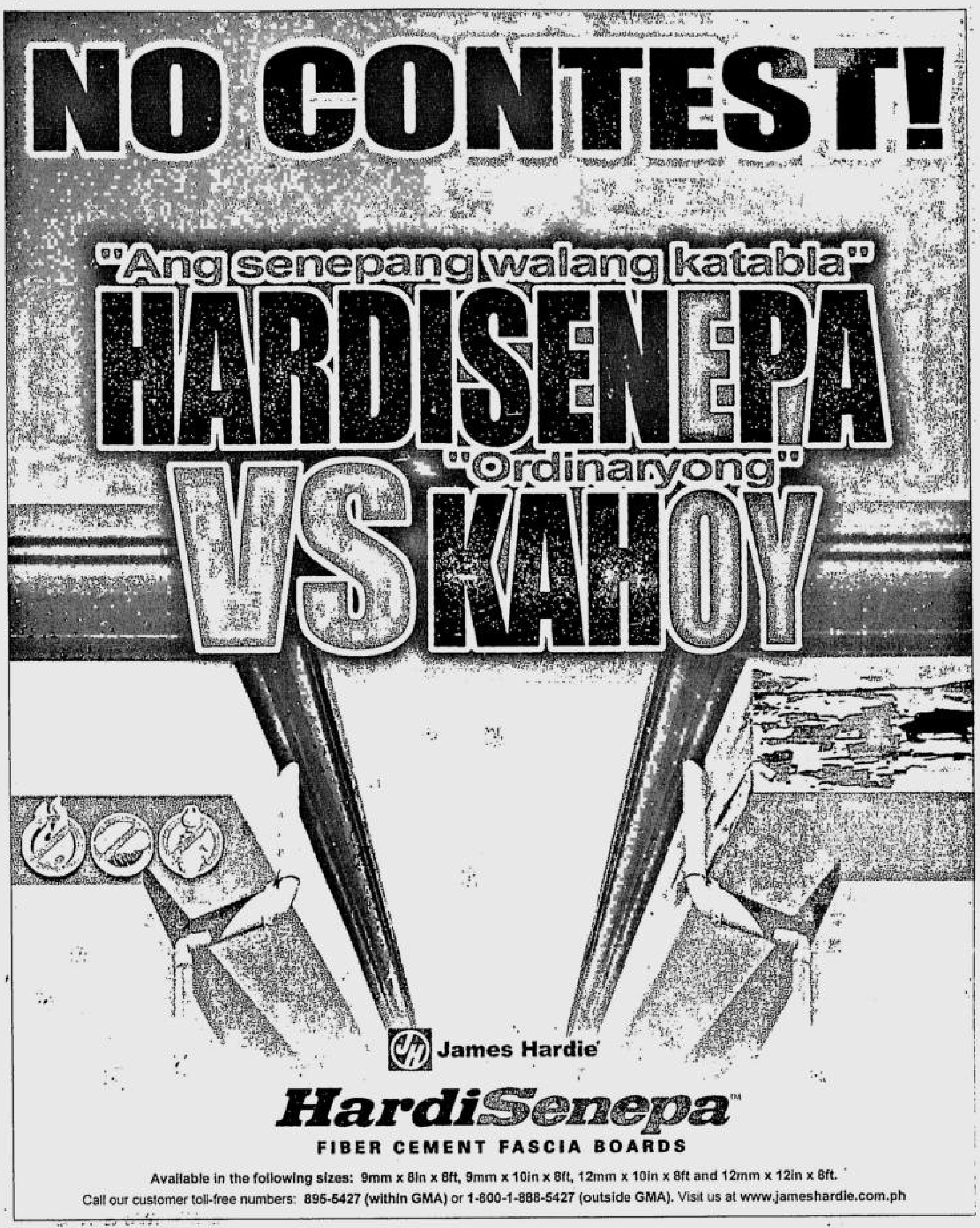

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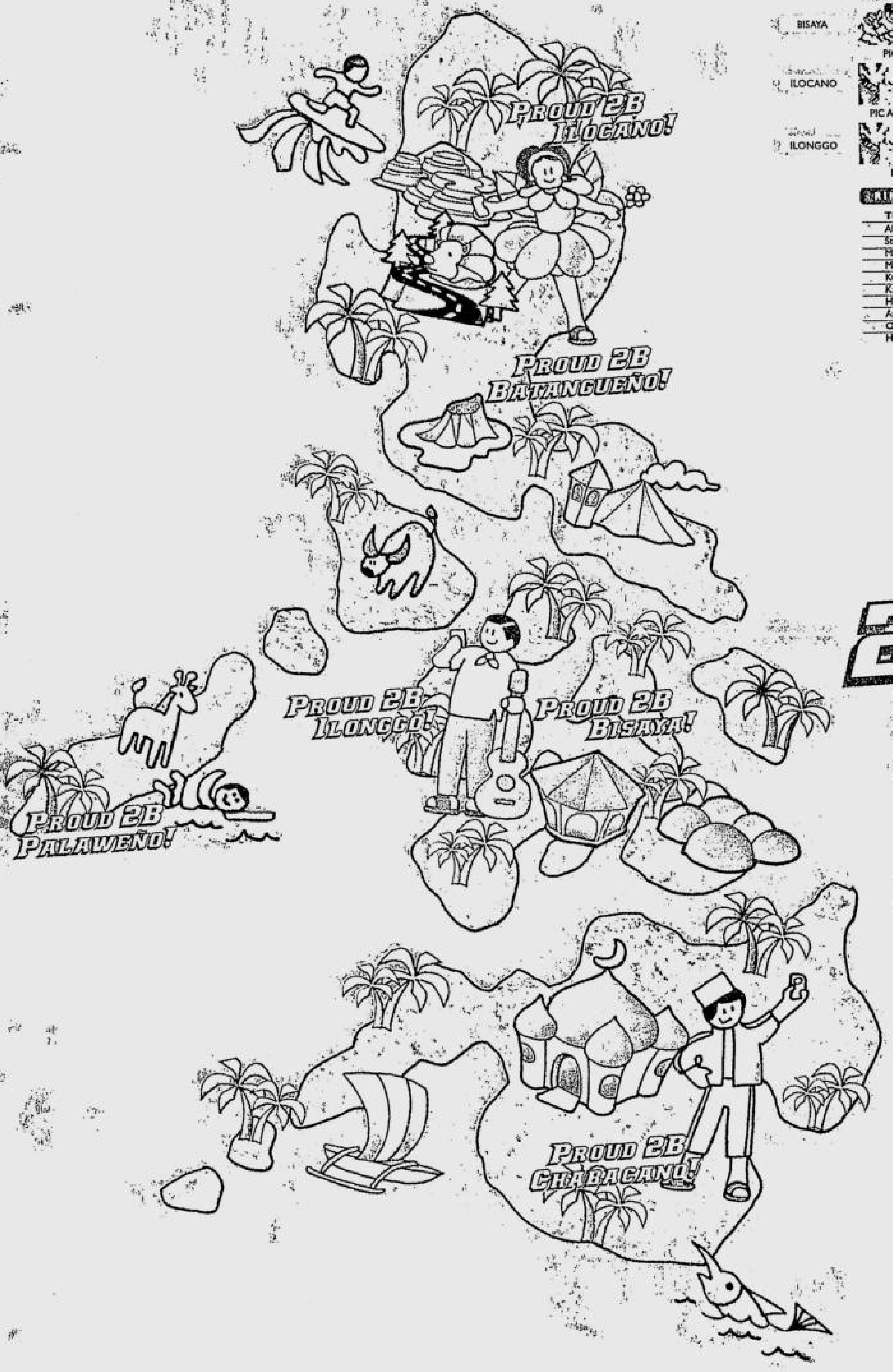
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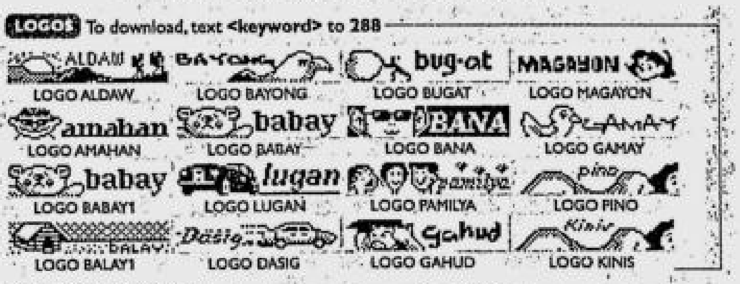

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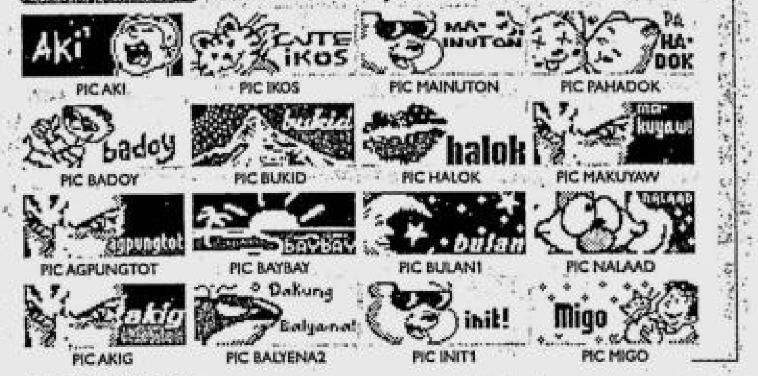

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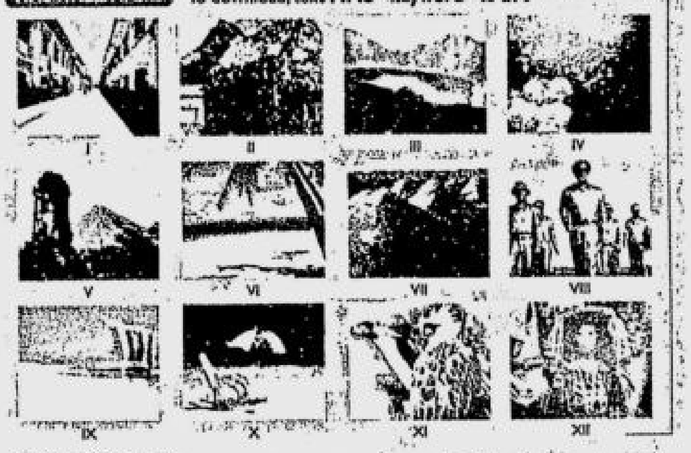

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Are you ready for a boob tube that doubles as a vanity set?

By Anne A. Jambora

LOOK no further than the mirror to check out the news, surf the Net, watch television or even keep track of your health.

That's right. A TV doubling as a mirror is promising to change everyone's lifestyle.

The Dutch electronics company Philips once again revolutionizes TV technology by coming out with the world's first-ever Mirror TV in 17-, 23- or 30-inch LCD. Switch on the device and it functions like a television set. Turn it off and it's unmistakably a mirror.

Think of the possibilities. Dashing from the bathroom mirror to the bedroom TV to catch a glimpse of the early morning traffic report, for instance, will become a thing of the past. With the Philips Mirror TV, people can watch the news while brushing their teeth or putting on makeup.

In fact, not far into the future, children may learn how to effectively brush their teeth simply because the mirror shows their fave toon on TV.

This nifty technological breakthrough is part of Philips' vision of Ambient Intelligence, where electronic features are seamlessly integrated into people's lives. Hence, the Mirror TV goes beyond reflecting a physical image. People can actually monitor their health status via the television, such as weight, blood pressure or sugar, and receive unsolicited advice if the "doctor coach," a mirror-based application, believes they fall short on their fitness and health bill.

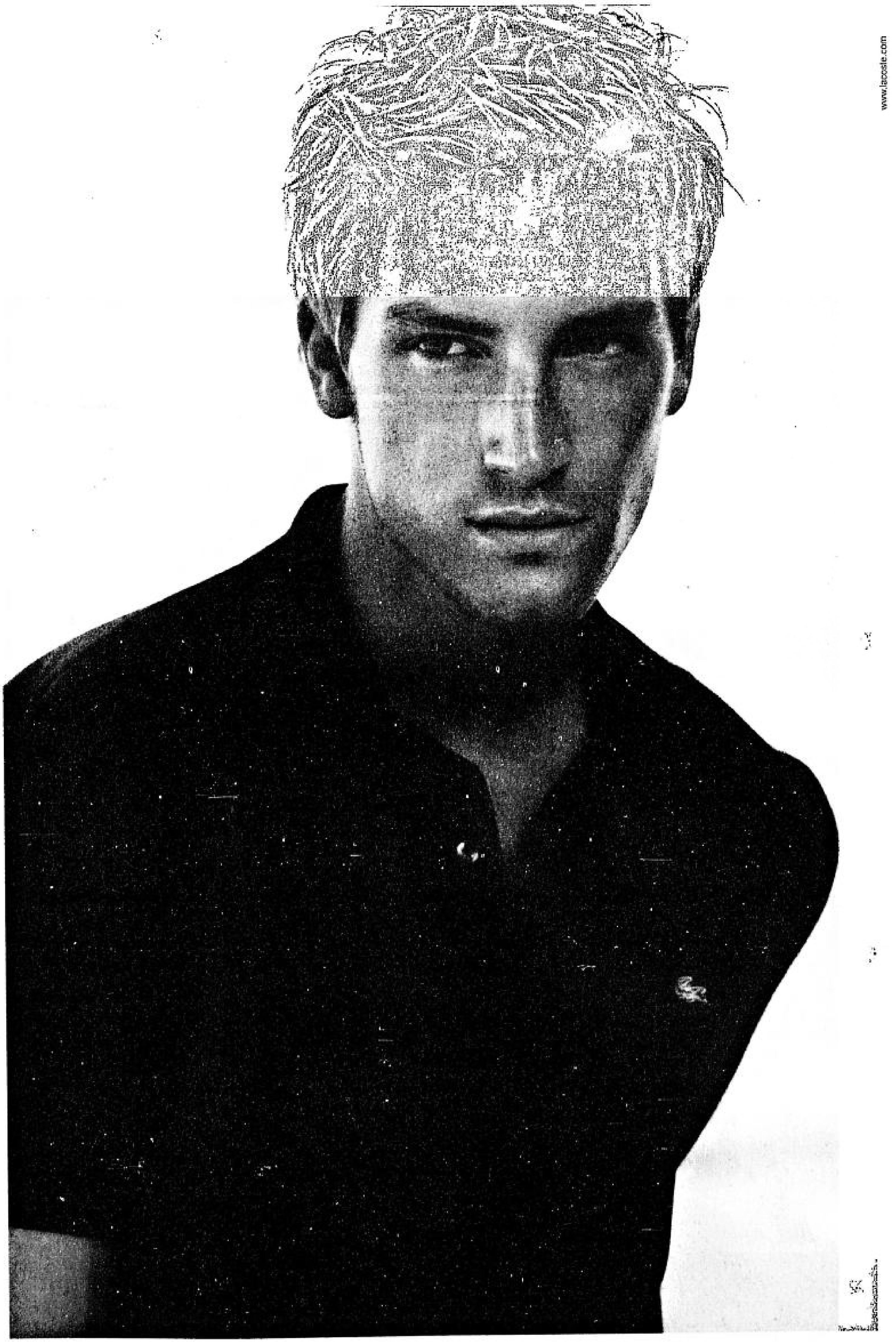
Connectivity

"Things are converging so fast that we need to be cognizant and aware, particularly when you get into the media service. I see broadband connectivity driving big [lifestyle] changes," says Alan Sparks, Philips SVP for Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Africa. PCs connecting to home entertainment systems and MP3 materials that play at home and the car are just a few of the examples of connectivity.

Sparks says consumers now demand a device that solves just about everything in their household. If it takes only one clicker to take

MIRROR/ E4

TECHNOLOGICAL WONDER. The Philips Mirror TV cunningly combines two important home accessories—the mirror and TV. PHOTOS FROM WWW.BLUEFI.CO.UK



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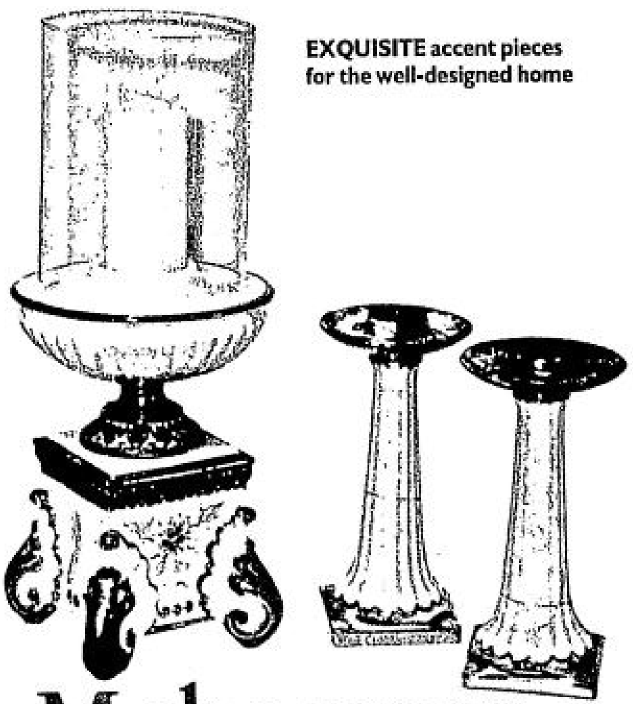


EXQUISITE accent pieces for the well-designed home

Make your home your dream house

LIVING 'n Style Complete Home Furnishing Center hopes to live up to its name by having under one roof everything homeowners need to create dream dwellings.

Text by Linda B. Bolido
Photos by Rudy Esperas

EVERYONE knows a house is not just gravel and sand, steel and wood.

A homeowner wants to have carefully chosen bits and pieces, accents and finishing to put a personal stamp of ownership on his/her place of residence.

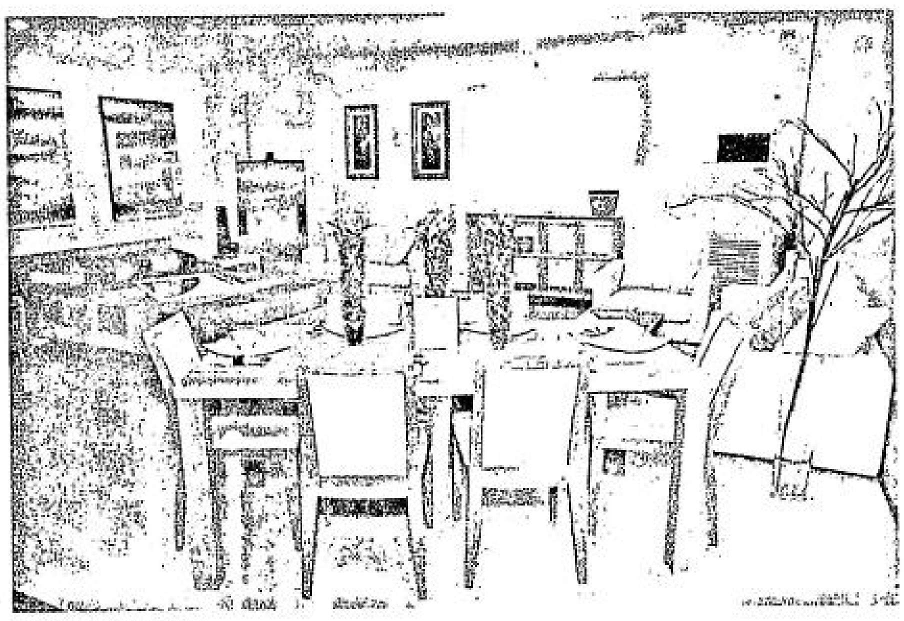
Luckily, these days, "personalizing" a house exactly as one dreamt it would be no longer has to involve a mad dash all over town to find the right stuff. Stores that offer under one roof everything a person can possibly need-and then some—for both outside and inside the house s/he has always wanted have made getting the right stuff that much easier.

The latest to offer this convenience is Living 'n Style Complete Home Furnishing Center at 2246 Don Chino Roces Ave. (formerly Pasong Tamo), Makati City. Formally opened recently, the store tries to put under one roof everything the homeowner and his/her interior designer can possibly need, with products that anticipate desired themes, colors, moods and overall look. It promises not only to provide answers to every customer's demand but also to give value for money. Prices at the store are said to be affordable compared to other establishments of the same nature.

A new lifestyle store tries to anticipate homeowners' desired themes, colors, moods and overall look

The Living 'n Style Complete Home Furnishing Center is the first business venture in Metro Manila of Cebu Oversea Hardware Co. Inc., the 50-year-old family-owned company that has already made a name for itself in the Visayas and Mindanao. Its two-story showroom on 2,000 sq m of space carries leading brand names in home finishing from Europe (Italy, Spain), Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Thailand, India and China), as well as the more reputable local labels.

One can have stylish walls or floors in any color, shade and finish with tiles from Malaysia's MML, Goucera (exclusively distributed by Living 'n Style), Azulindus Marti, Omica, KIM, Lepanto, Hornitex and Optima laminate flooring.

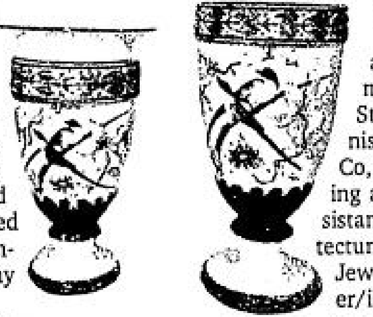


WORKS of leading Filipino artists, aside from a wide selection of furniture, are available.

CUSTOMERS can find leading brands in home finishing from Europe and Asia, as well as top-of-the-line local labels.

Bathing in luxury

Bathrooms need not have simply functional shower, sink and toilet bowl. With a wide array of fixtures from Cool, Gribagno, Delta, Moershu and Hans Grohe; Bali tubs and whirlpools; shower systems and enclosure by Apollo; water closet, lavatories and tubs by Cool, Duravit, Royal Tern and American Standard; water heaters by Champs; bathroom furniture by Royo of Spain and Pierra vanities and bathtubs and perfection offered by Markee vanities, the bathroom can be as luxurious as any other part of the house.



GILDED decorative vases for that Old World touch

For those who think the kitchen should be the heart of any home, Mobelhaus carries several modular kitchen and cabinetry designs that will help make any cook's work a breeze. Mobelhaus has functional closet systems that make optional use of space.

Living 'n Style also has PVC doors, ceiling and wall partitions by Upson; door locks and knobs by Fusital and Schlage; kitchen sinks by Teka; carpets and rugs by Premium Carpets; natural granite, marble and other natural stones by Sharran Enterprises Inc.; Solflex countertops by S.E.A. Olympus; and exhaust fans by Vector/Masano, among others.

Turn house into home

While the ground floor carries stuff that meet—in a stylish way to be sure—every function a house is supposed to perform, the second floor offers the things that make a structure a home. Furniture for cozy bedrooms and cheerful living rooms in contemporary designs—ash veneer, cheery veneer and Kian-Wenge; Italian and Indonesian furniture. Even kids' rooms can be customized with the right pieces from the furniture showcase for children.

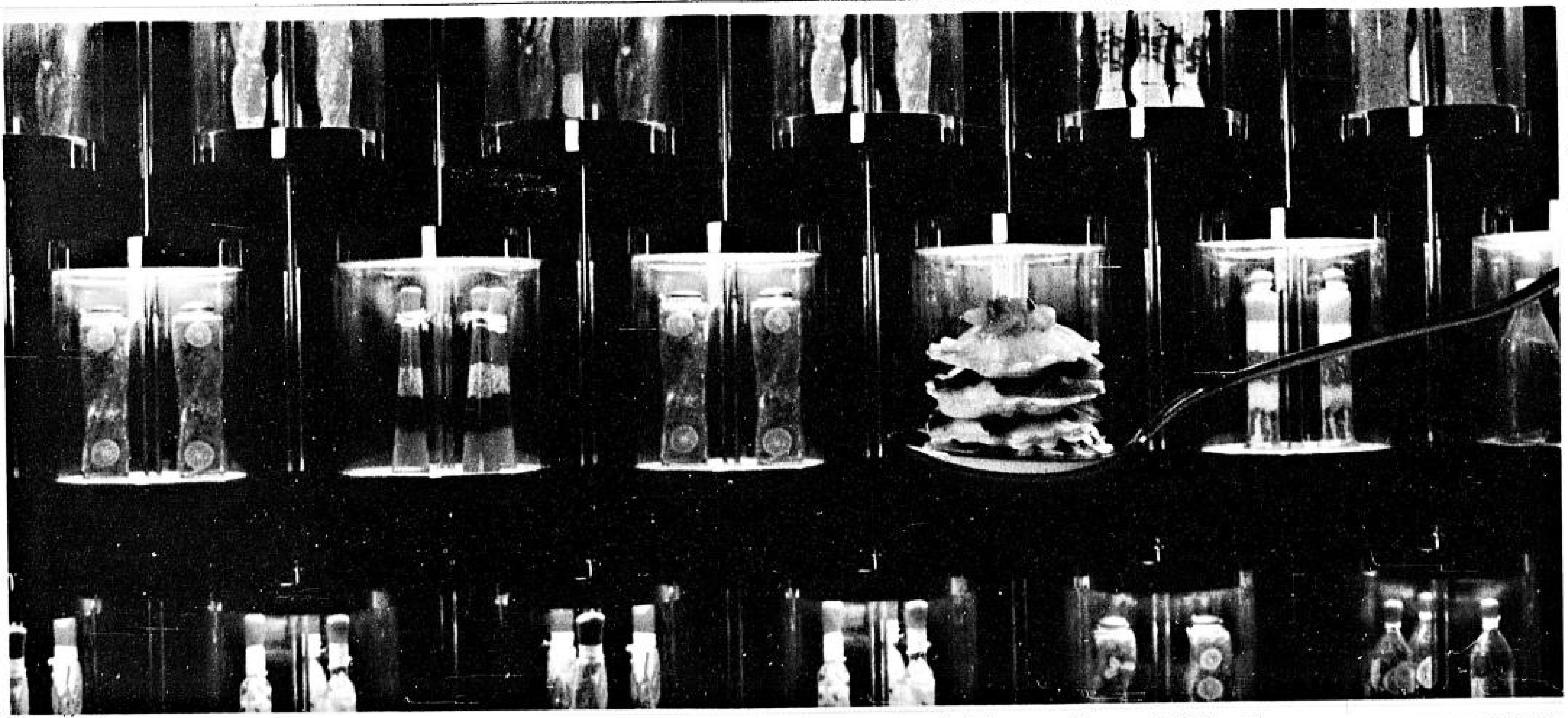
Corporate types can choose office furniture that reflect their individual personalities and style from a wide array of pieces by Design World Trade Center.

Interior finishing details available include Asian and European lighting systems and lampshades, huge glass vases, pillows, assorted blooms and scented candles, Premium carpets and rugs, floral arrangements, landscape and wrought-iron furniture. Sparko can add touches of sophistication when needed.

Original artworks by some of the country's leading visual artists are also offered at prices within one's budget by the Renaissance Art Gallery.

Composing the sales and marketing management team of the Living 'n Style Complete Home Furnishing Center are Michael Co, vice president, marketing and sales; James Co, assistant vice president, architectural and finishing division; Jewel Co, marketing manager/interior designer; Ferdinand Co, vice president, operations; Cathy Co, finance comptroller; Ronnie Fernandez, general manager; and Cristina Lopez, store manager.

The Living 'n Style Complete Home Furnishing Center is open 9 a.m.- 7 p.m., Monday-Friday; and 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Saturday.



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Her friend is mean to her

LIVE AND LET LIVE

Tita Dulce

DEAR Tita Dulce,

Rita has been my friend since grade school. She was at the top academically and was helpful to me in my studies.

In college, when I had my first boyfriend, Rita was the one who pointed out the errors in my choice. I did not listen to her, but it turned out she was right, and I was lucky I did not end up marrying the guy.

We're now in our late 30s and still keep in touch. I have my own small business, still single and unattached, but happy. She's a top executive in a top company, married to a nice guy, and has three kids.

But one time, when we were out drinking, she revealed that she'd been having an affair with a married guy.

I know her husband to be a good guy and a good provider. Rita said, though, that she was unsatisfied in bed because he thought sex was just for procreation and (it was) sinful (to do it) for any other purpose.

I got the impression that her lover was the father of one of her children. Her husband knew of the affair but he swept it under the rug, fearing a scandal. He has been doing his best, though, to please her.

I was shocked to hear about her affair. But I was also glad she confided in me because, unlike before, now (it was my turn to help her).

(Then she changed and started talking) about how much she loved her husband. She'd often refuse to talk about the affair, although sometimes she'd whisper about it when we were on the phone.

I stopped asking her about her continuing marital problems.

The worse change in her is how she comments on my ideas and lifestyle, which she has long been familiar with. But now she no longer suggests but criticizes even in front of other people, and she seems mean to me.

I try to put up with it, being grateful for her help in the past, but I'm finding it harder each time she "lambasts" me.

What should I do? Please don't ask me, though, to end our friendship because I can't.

SHERYLL

Don't you find it interesting that Rita, whose life has gone awry, is criticizing you, whose life is going well?

Rita reminds me of people who are so used to standing above the rest they couldn't accept it when they lose their stature.

To feel better, they pull or push down other people so those around them would be lower than they are. That way, people like Rita will feel superior once again.

In public, Rita has top ratings professionally and marriage-wise. Privately, however, she knows that, because she ruined her marriage, she is in truth a shiny apple with a rotten core. That is hard to accept.

So, do you think Rita is in fact one of those people I mentioned? If you do, then stick with her.

Misery loves company. That's a very unhealthy arrangement, of course, but if the company knows what's going on, and she cares, then it won't hurt her and she could be what a miserable friend needs.

Often, however, the best person to help someone who feels miserable is a psychiatrist.

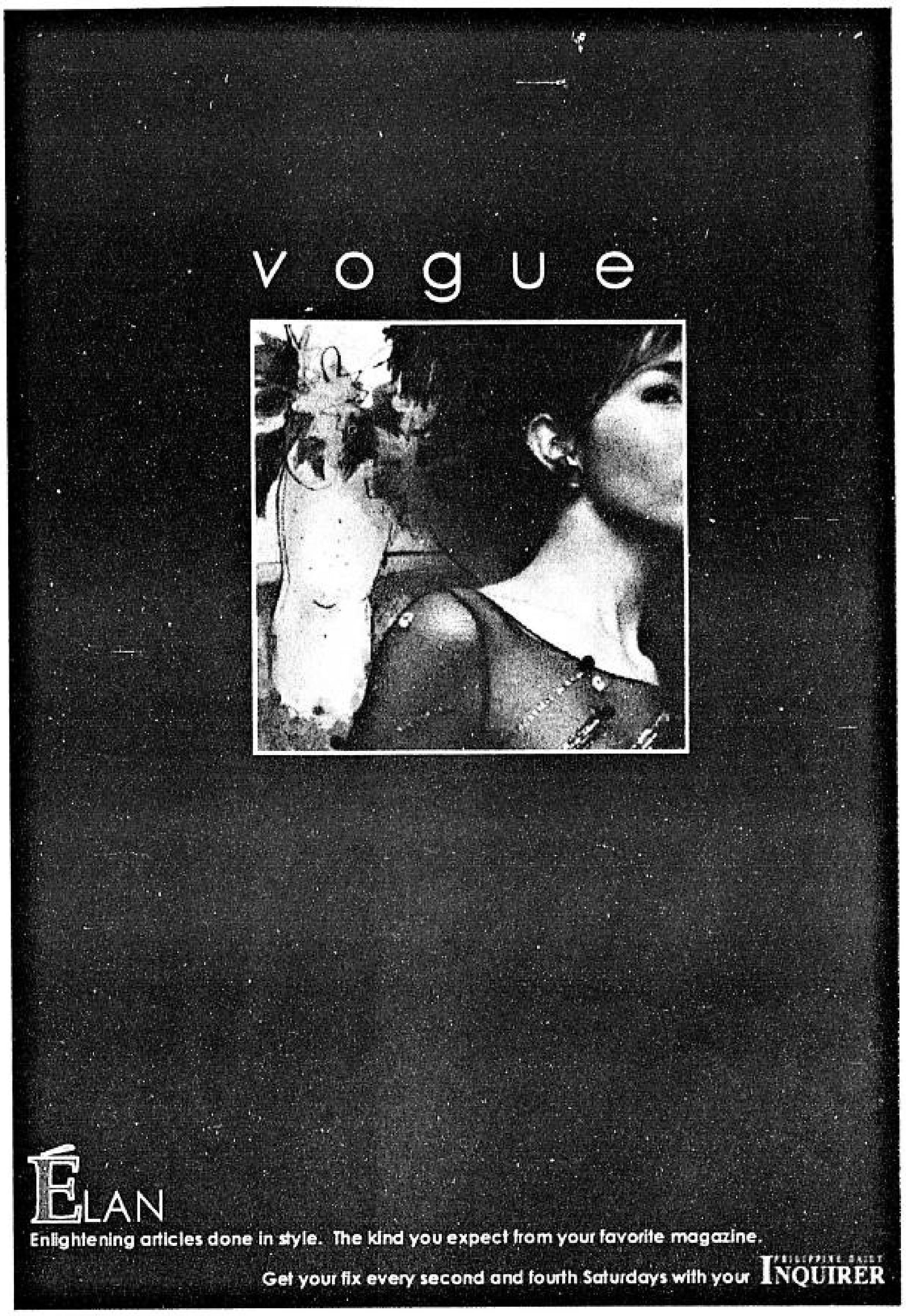
Rita would probably be gravely offended if you ask her to see a psychiatrist, so don't even try. Not yet, anyway.

First, just be her reliable "punching bag." Don't take the blows personally. She might be criticizing herself whenever she is mean to you. When she asks what you think of her and her actions, don't say she is guilty or bad.

Find the right time to mention the advantages of consulting a psychiatrist. If she resists, withdraw and gently try again some other time.

Misery needs company. And while Rita may not realize it, she is lucky to have a friend like you.

E-mail titadulce@netscape.net or send letters to P.O. Box 2353, Makati CPO 1263 Makati City, or PDI, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City



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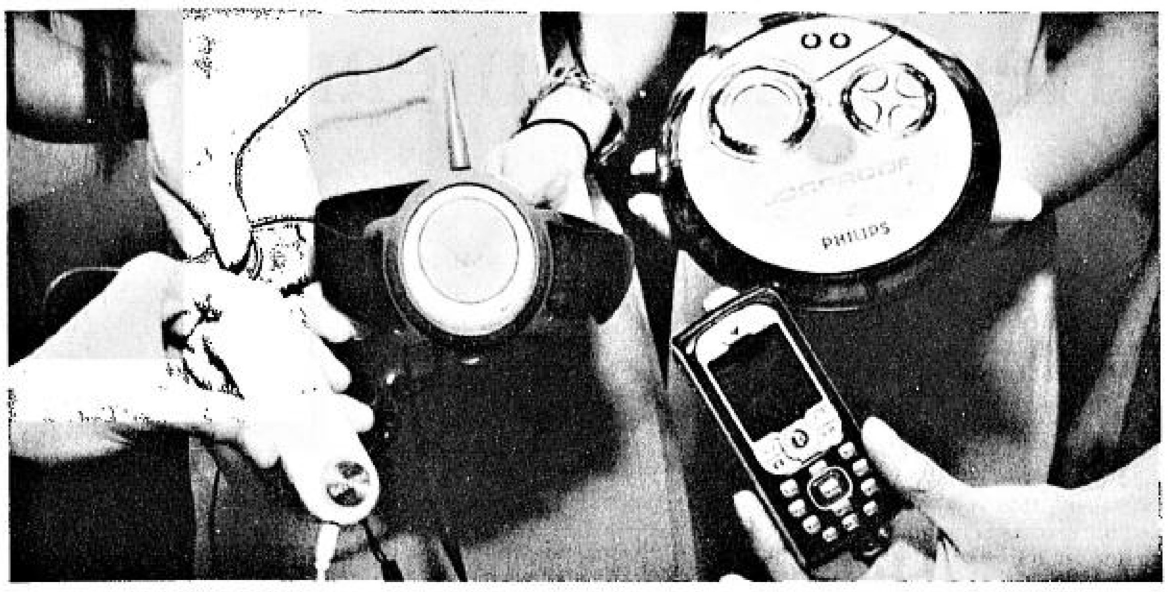


ELECTRONIC 'BLING-BLINGS.' Philips Key Ring, Philips-Nike portable sport audio player, cell phone and portable VCD/MP3-CD player

Mirror images on my TV

From page E1

care of the television, music, lights, etc., then so be it. Having only one item will be cost-effective but more expensive, he says, but that's where the future is headed in terms of domestic appliances.

Home PCs or laptops can also be linked to the Mirror TV, giving end-users a more flexible use of the device and certainly more value for their money, since this television set doesn't come cheap.

"If I were diabetic and I need to regulate the situation at home, I could be testing my blood at home, putting it online and getting the answers," Sparks says.

Although Philips initially planned to market the Mirror TV to hotels (it will be available in the Philippines late this year), it is currently fine-tuning the product and testing more advanced versions for the home environment that may be launched in 2005.

Eventually, buyers can opt for a bigger mirror that pops up a window for TV viewing, or go for the whole thing. After all, the Mirror TV is customizable to go with the interior design, including flexibility in frame and color.

Upscale ambience

While top hotels may use the Mirror TV for purely aesthetic purposes, it can also be useful for quick bill payments, pay-per-view channels, etc.

The Mirror TV can enhance the hotel's upscale ambience, and since it can be set up on a wall as a centerpiece, small spaces will be architecturally refined. And because it is widescreen with a 16:9 ratio and 1,280 x 768 resolution, the high-def Mirror TV is certainly ideal for movie viewing.

Among other things Philips is working on, "Asianized" mobile phones will also be introduced, Sparks says. The gadget is selling in Asia more than in any other part of the world, so the new Philips cell phones will be especially tailored to the Asian lifestyle.

"Mobile phones are like bling-blings in Asia," he says.

According to him, Asians prefer clamshell over bar mobile phones. The more expressive the phone, the better. Hence, Philips' new range will have funkier designs, flashy lights, more fun features and applications for a very personalized touch.

"People can take pictures and write on it like a postcard with the use of an electronic pen, and send it as an MMS," he says.

Some models have women consumers in mind, such as an LCD screen that doubles as, well, a mirror, applying the unique Mirror TV technology to cell phones. So for that hasty touch-up, just flip the cell phone open and start prepping up.

Philips is also developing the blue ray DVD disc format that can store up to 10 times more data and play up to five movies per disc. The brand's consistent bestsellers, after all, are its wide range of home entertainment products, from televisions and DVD players to audio components and home theaters.

"What we do is keep them moving forward and keep them fresh. I think we're going to have a good year in the Philippines," he says.

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

A bit of Italy at home

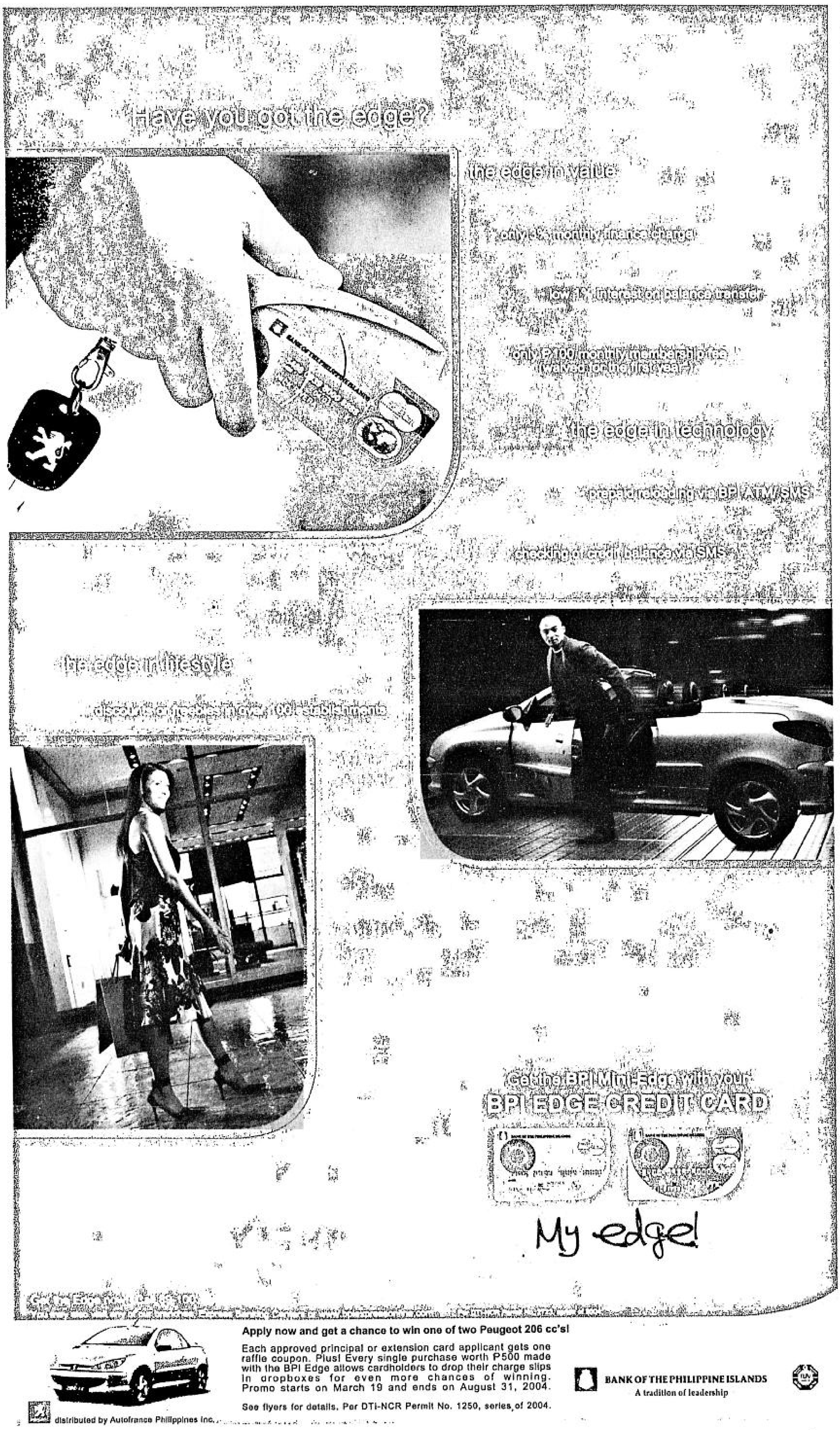
FURNITALIA in Greenhills is the country's first and only distributor of Italy's premier furniture brands.

It showcases works by leading designers like Lord Norman Foster, Richard Meier, Philippe Starck, Ron Arad, Rodolfo Dordoni, Vittorio Livi and F.A. Porsche and carries furniture with well-known labels such as Poltrona Frau, Galli, Longhi, Comfort, Fiam and Penta.

Molteni & C's system furniture and sofas and Fontana Arte's lights are the latest additions to the Italian pieces.

Designs range from the romantic '30s to the colorful Art Deco, playful '70s and minimalist Zen.

Visit the Poltrona Frau showroom at Furnitalia, Designmix Building, 59 Connecticut St., Northeast Greenhills, San Juan. Call 7220156 and 7220389.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LIFESTYLE

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Wearing your faith: 'Passion' as fashion

A SCENE from Mel Gibson's "The Passion of The Christ"

DENVER—Nail pendants, pocket crosses and lapel pins tied to Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" are so popular that local Christian bookstore owners can't keep them on the shelves and are waiting for back orders.

Marketers say the products were created to give Christians the chance to talk about their faith. But some ministers, after hearing reports that some of the products were becoming trendy fashion items, say the movie's message should speak for itself.

"Anything else is just a moneymaker," said Joe Malacara, pastor of All People's Praise Center in Colorado Springs.

More than 1.3 million witness cards, lapel pins and pocket stones were shipped to stores in January to promote the movie's February opening, said Dwight Robinson, marketing director for Bob Siemon Designs, one of three companies licensed by Gibson to produce items promoting the film.

In mid-February, Siemon shipped 100,000 pewter nail pendants fashioned like the ones used to crucify Jesus, adding to controversy surrounding the movie. Some have said the film is overly violent and anti-Semitic.

The Passion nail is available in two lengths and attached to a leather cord. Merchandisers call the pendant the new symbol of a Christian. Robinson said youth wear the nail as an edgier way to identify their faith, but some say teens are wearing the nails because

WEARING/ F3

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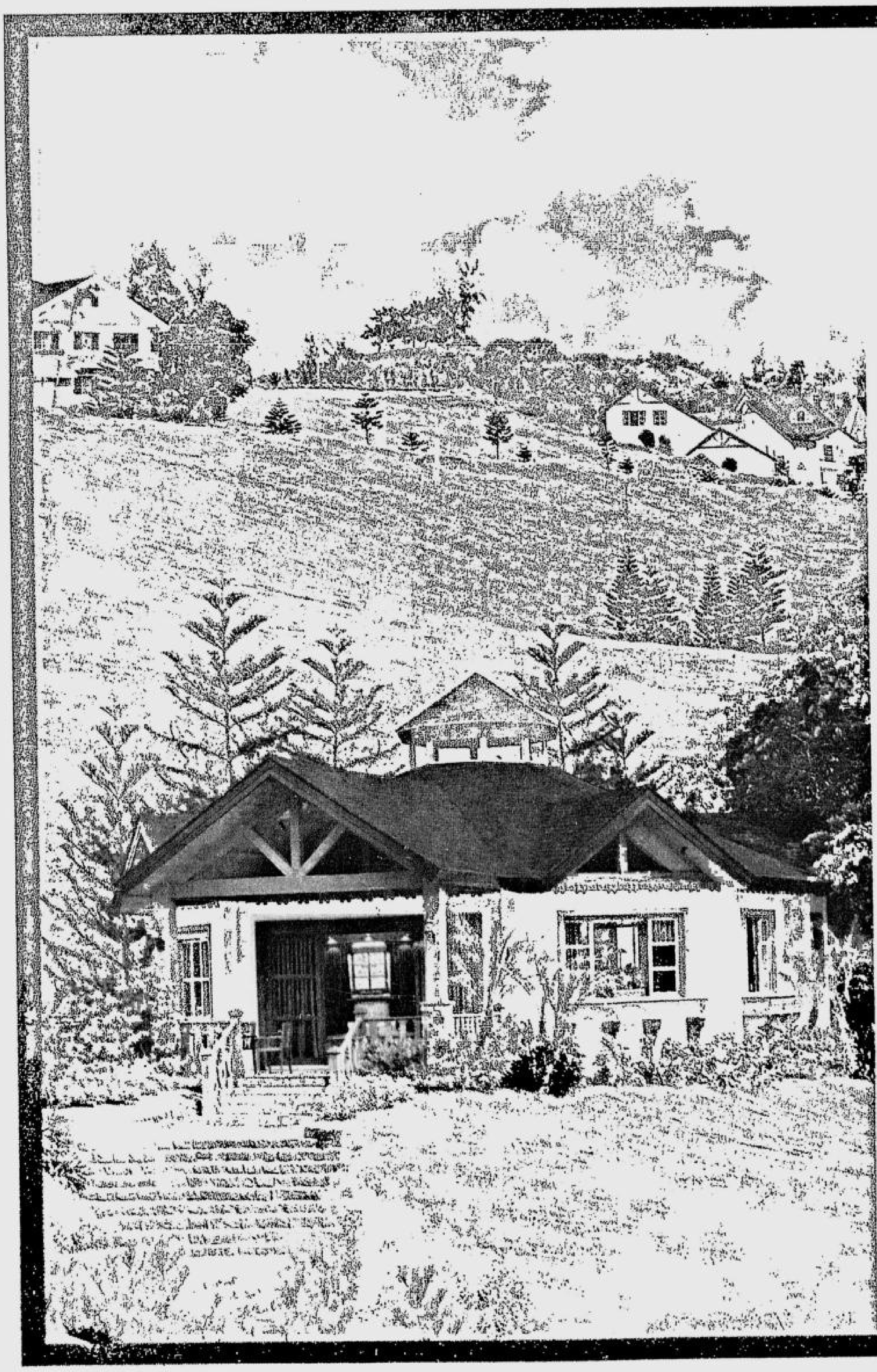

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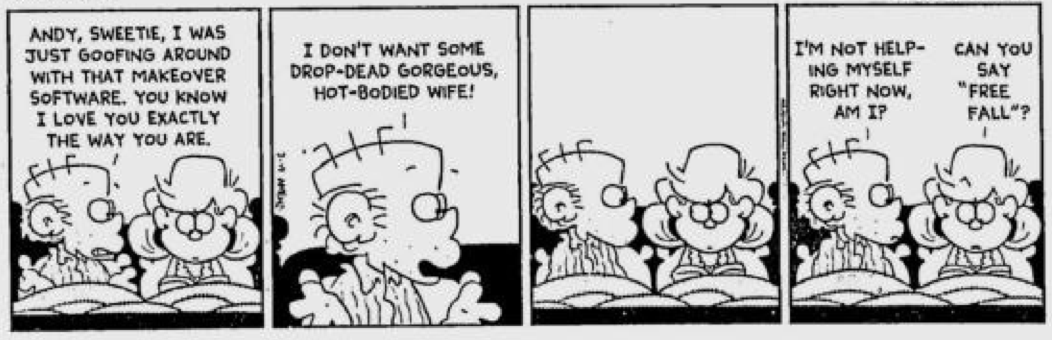
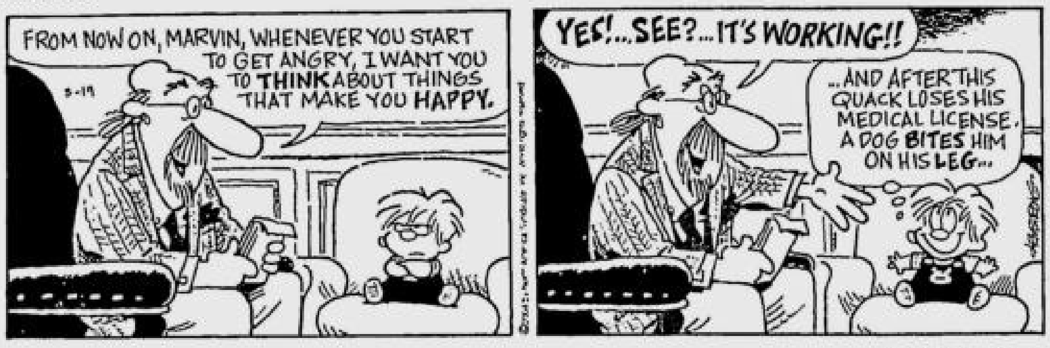
BY BILL AMEND


ANDY, SWEETIE, I WAS JUST GOOFING AROUND WITH THAT MAKEOVER SOFTWARE. YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU EXACTLY THE WAY YOU ARE.
I DON'T WANT SOME DROP-DEAD GORGEOUS, HOT-BODIED WIFE!
I'M NOT HELPING MYSELF RIGHT NOW, AM I?
CAN YOU SAY "FREE FALL"?

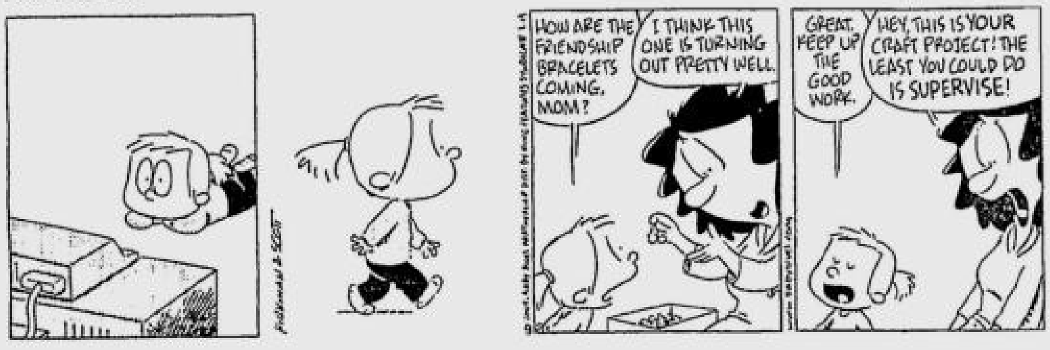
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


FROM NOW ON, MARVIN, WHENEVER YOU START TO GET ANGRY, I WANT YOU TO THINK ABOUT THINGS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY.
3-19
YES!...SEE?...IT'S WORKING!!
...AND AFTER THIS QUACK LOSES HIS MEDICAL LICENSE, A DOG BITES HIM ON HIS LEG...

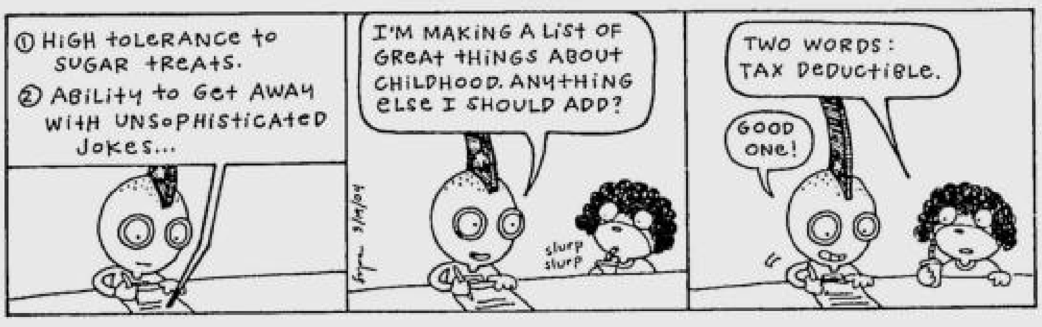
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HOW ARE THE FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS COMING, MOM?
I THINK THIS ONE IS TURNING OUT PRETTY WELL.
GREAT. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK.
HEY, THIS IS YOUR CRAFT PROJECT! THE LEAST YOU COULD DO IS SUPERVISE!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


① HIGH TOLERANCE TO SUGAR TREATS.
② ABILITY TO GET AWAY WITH UNSOPHISTICATED JOKES...
I'M MAKING A LIST OF GREAT THINGS ABOUT CHILDHOOD. ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD ADD?
slurp slurp
3/19/04
TWO WORDS: TAX DEDUCTIBLE.
GOOD ONE!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are relentless, tireless and persistent. You work very hard to achieve your objectives. Nevertheless, your goals reflect your dreams and inner needs. You love the stimulation of fresh territory and new challenges. You will adore the year ahead because it is full of new beginnings and adventures! Remain open and flexible.

Birthdate of: Bruce Willis, actor; Glenn Close, actress; Rachel Blanchard, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Look for ways to help your friends today. You feel a genuine concern for someone. (By nature, you are generous and always willing to lend your support.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your ability to see the possibilities of something at work might impress someone. Don't be afraid to express your opinions. All great things begin as someone's dream.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your idealism is aroused today. You see how collective action can improve the world. If you can't help 100 people, perhaps you can help just one.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might see a completely new use for available resources at work or at home. After all, necessity is the mother of invention. Don't be afraid to act on your ideas.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): A friend might need to confide in you today. You don't necessarily have to agree. You just have to lend a sympathetic ear and show that you understand.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Research into unusual areas could yield surprising results today. Your ability to entertain fanciful possibilities could give you wonderful results now. Trust yourself.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You need beauty in your everyday surroundings. Today your artistic and creative abilities can make this happen. It might be in a tiny way; it might be in a very big way.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Be willing to help a co-worker or friend today. Someone needs to discuss a secret with you. Fortunately, you are discrete and always protect your sources.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Your creative imagination can help you do something special today. Remember how to look at the world with a child's eyes.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): A family member needs your help or your support today. Be ready to offer some practical assistance. On the other hand, you might be the one who needs help from someone else.

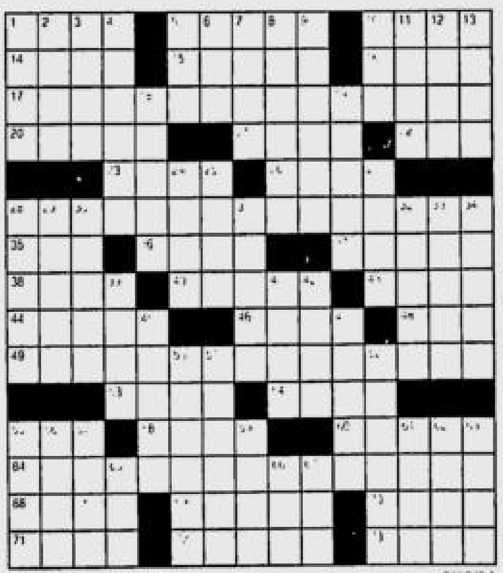
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your inner world could provide you with the inspiration to do something different today. You want your daily surroundings to be more beautiful and happier.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is not a good day for performing tasks that require clarity and attention to detail. You prefer to escape into the world of fantasy and daydreams. (Einstein credited much of his work to his imagination.)

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Horse color
5 Emmy or Tony
10 Involved with
14 Toward shelter
15 Kitchen gizmo
16 Tide type
17 Caveman?
20 Canine, e.g.
21 Offended
22 Howard or Norton
23 Oaf
26 Black in Burgundy
28 Woodsman?
35 Harem room
36 Orderly
37 Concur
38 Level to the ground
40 Working copy
43 Rummies
44 Be unfaithful
46 Inside info
48 Born in Bordeaux
49 Foremen?
53 Entreaty
54 Twist sideways
55 Wrath
58 Sea eagles
60 Material for tutus
64 Batsman?
68 Man or Dogs
69 Madagascar primate
70 Shortened bullets
71 Remain
72 Unemotional
73 Dregs

DOWN
1 Simple boat
2 Hodgepodge
3 Dynamic beginning?
4 Get snug
5 Behave
6 Court
7 St. Louis landmark
8 Second showings
9 Timber fungus
10 Wayside lodge
11 Kiss and cuddle
12 Good yarn
13 Event for all comers
18 Irritant
19 City on the Mohawk
24 Exploited
25 Skiers' ride
27 Scott Joplin works
28 London flashlight
29 Gem State
30 Star observer
31 Day's march
32 Monotonous tone
33 Dissuade
34 Affirmative replies
39 Lawman Wyatt
41 Obscuring hazes
42 Plane or saw
45 Masonic doorkeeper
47 Most distant planet
50 Emerald and aquamarine
51 Surgical instrument
52 Of a medieval system
55 Sacred Nile bird
56 Remainder
57 Songstress Fitzgerald
59 Wrestling form
61 Green fruit
62 Type of duck?
63 Slaughter in Cooperstown
65 Whimsical
66 Catch some rays
67 Attempt



By Roger Jurgovan
Potomac, MD

3/19/04

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

N	A	S	A	L		V	A	L	E	S		W	B	A
P	R	U	N	E		A	D	I	E	U		H	A	S
R	E	R	A	N		S	H	E	L	L	F	I	S	H
		L	I	A	I	S	E			K	Y	R	I	E
A	M	Y	S		R	A	R	E	R		I	L	L	S
S	E	S		P	A	L	E	T	O	T				
C	L	O	T	S			S	U	N	R	I	S	E	S
A	B	R	E	A	S	T		I	S	A	D	O	R	A
P	A	T	F	I	L	A	F			M	O	U	R	N
				M	A	R	C	E	L	S		R	E	D
L	A	U	E		B	A	L	M	Y		T	A	D	S
E	D	E	M	A			I	C	E	C	A	P		
G	R	A	S	S	T	Y	P	L		A	L	P	H	A
E	E	L		P	H	A	S	E		S	O	L	O	N
R	M	S		J	E	W	E	L		K	N	E	E	D

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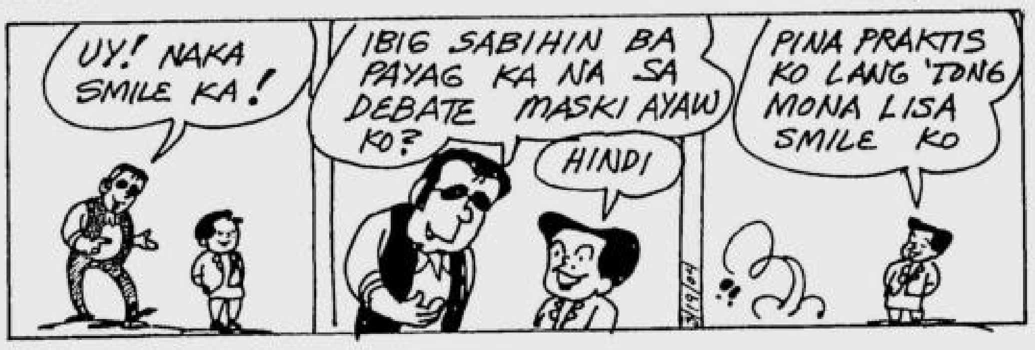
3/19/04

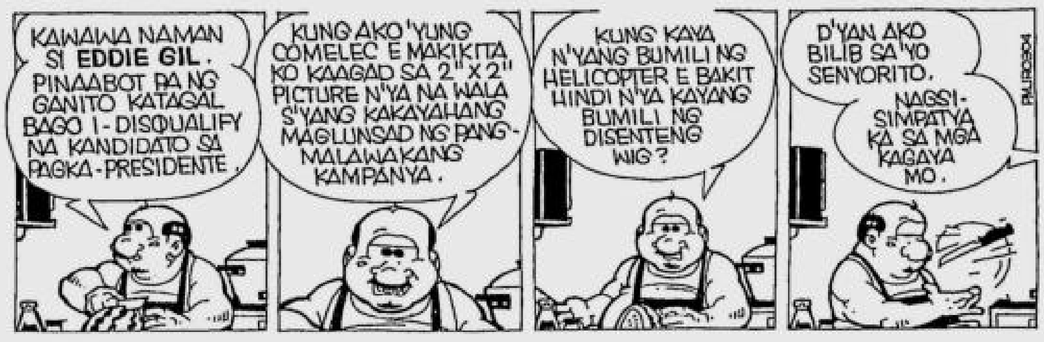
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


UY! NAKA SMILE KA!
IBIG SABIHIN BA PAYAG KA NA SA DEBATE MASKI AYAW KO?
HINDI
3/19/04
PINA PRAKTIS KO LANG 'TONG MONA LISA SMILE KO

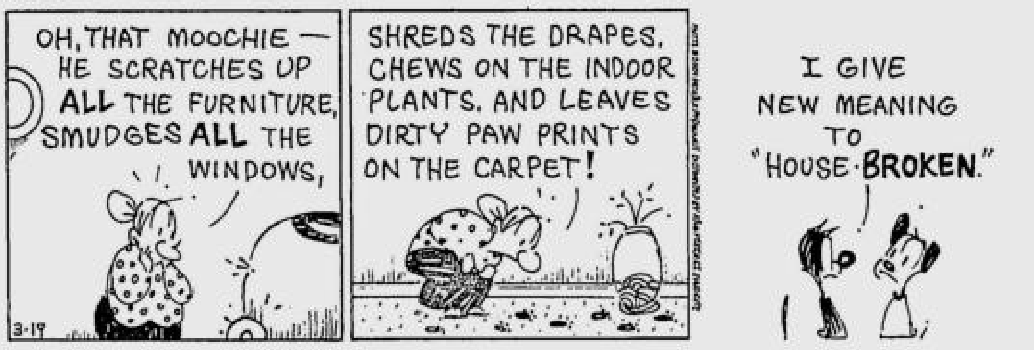
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


KAWAWA NAMAN SI EDDIE GIL. PINAABOT PA NG GANITO KATAGAL BAGO I-DISQUALIFY NA KANDIDATO SA PAGKA-PRESIDENTE.
KUNG AKO 'YUNG COMELEC E MAKIKITA KO KAAGAD SA 2" X 2" PICTURE N'YA NA WALA S'YANG KAKAYAHANG MAGLUNSAD NG PANG-MALAWAKANG KAMPANYA.
KUNG KAYA N'YANG BUMILI NG HELICOPTER E BAKIT HINDI N'YA KAYANG BUMILI NG DISENTENG WIG?
D'YAN AKO BILIB SA'YO SENYORITO.
NAGSISIMPATYA KA SA MGA KAGAYA MO.
PMJR0304

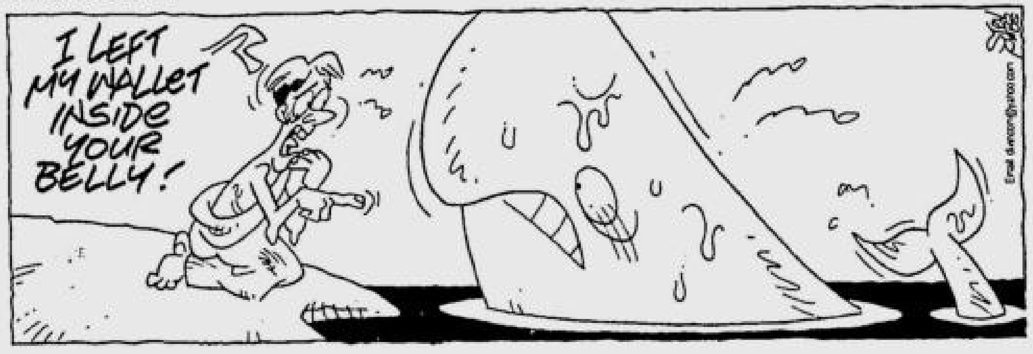
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OH, THAT MOOCHIE — HE SCRATCHES UP ALL THE FURNITURE, SMUDGES ALL THE WINDOWS,
3-19
SHREDS THE DRAPES, CHEWS ON THE INDOOR PLANTS, AND LEAVES DIRTY PAW PRINTS ON THE CARPET!
I GIVE NEW MEANING TO "HOUSE-BROKEN."

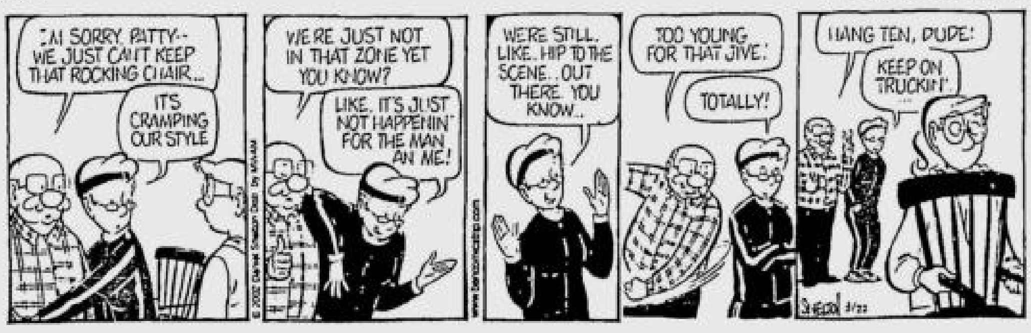
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


I LEFT MY WALLET INSIDE YOUR BELLY!

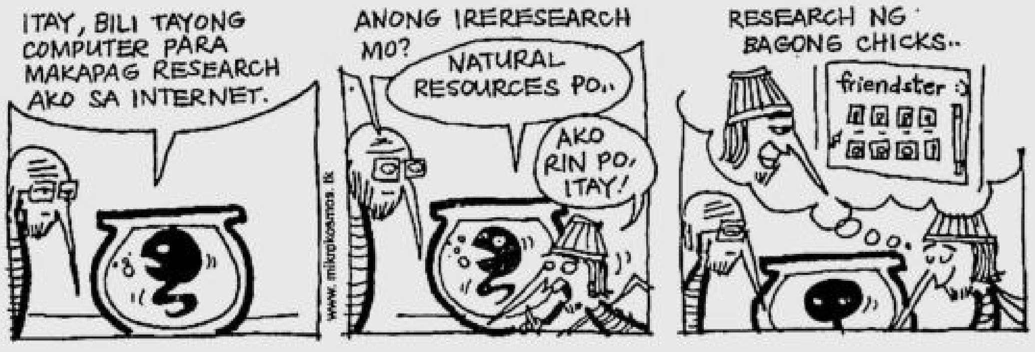
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I'M SORRY, PATTY-- WE JUST CAN'T KEEP THAT ROCKING CHAIR...
ITS CRAMPING OUR STYLE
WE'RE JUST NOT IN THAT ZONE YET YOU KNOW?
LIKE, IT'S JUST NOT HAPPENIN' FOR THE MAN AN' ME!
WE'RE STILL, LIKE, HIP TO THE SCENE...OUT THERE, YOU KNOW...
TOO YOUNG FOR THAT JIVE.
TOTALLY!
HANG TEN, DUDE!
KEEP ON TRUCKIN'.

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO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NATURAL RESOURCES PO..
AKO RIN PO, ITAY!
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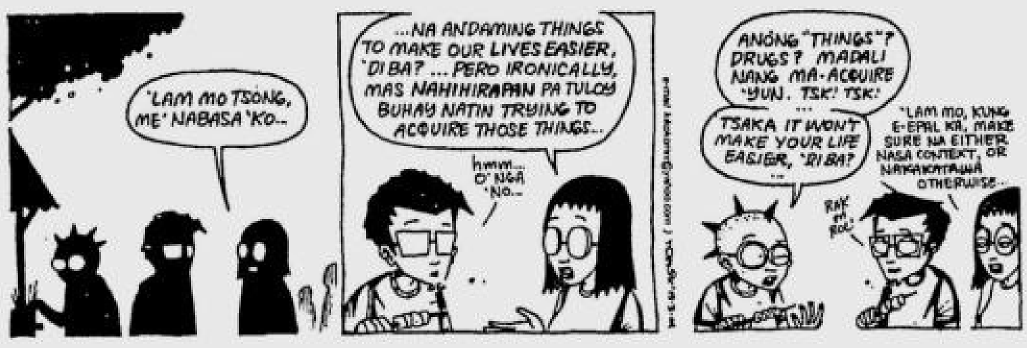
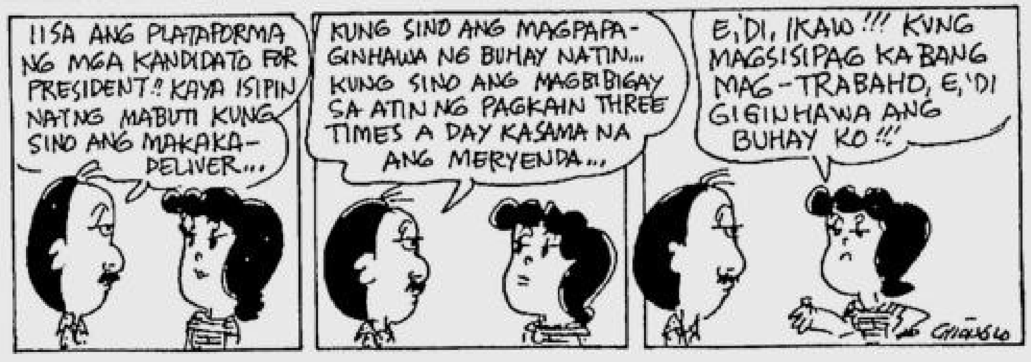
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


'LAM MO TSONG, ME' NABASA 'KO..
...NA ANDAMING THINGS TO MAKE OUR LIVES EASIER, 'DI BA? ...PERO IRONICALLY, MAS NAHIHIRAPAN PA TULOY BUHAY NATIN TRYING TO ACQUIRE THOSE THINGS..
hmm.. O' NGA 'NO..
ANONG "THINGS"? DRUGS? MADALI NANG MA-ACQUIRE 'YUN. TSK! TSK!
TSAKA IT WON'T MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER, 'DI BA?
'LAM MO, KUNG E-EPAL KA, MAKE SURE NA EITHER NASA CONTEXT, OR NAKAKATAWA OTHERWISE..
RAK EN ROL!

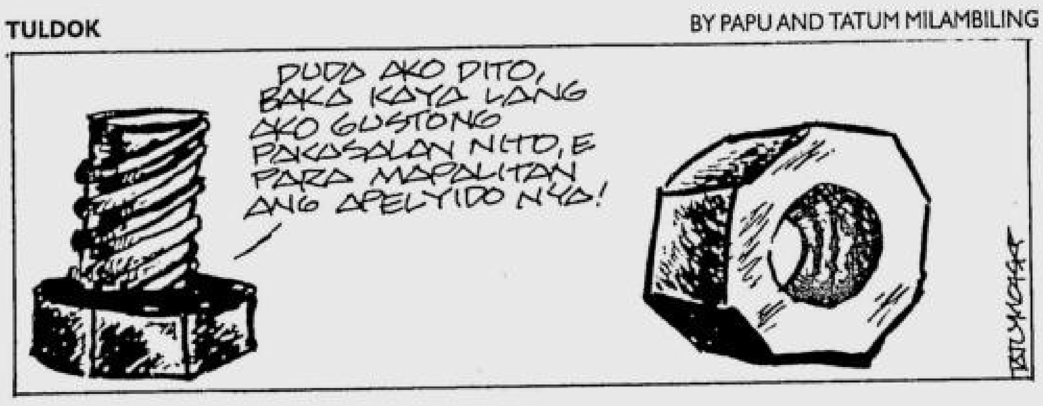
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


IISA ANG PLATAPORMA NG MGA KANDIDATO FOR PRESIDENT!! KAYA ISIPIN NATING MABUTI KUNG SINO ANG MAKAKA-DELIVER...
KUNG SINO ANG MAGPAPA-GINHAWA NG BUHAY NATIN... KUNG SINO ANG MAGBIBIGAY SA ATIN NG PAGKAIN THREE TIMES A DAY KASAMA NA ANG MERYENDA...
E, DI, IKAW!!! KUNG MAGSISIPAG KA BANG MAG-TRABAHO, E, 'DI GIGINHAWA ANG BUHAY KO!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


DUDA AKO DITO, BAKA KAYA LANG AKO GUSTONG PAKASALAN NITO, E PARA MAPALITAN ANG APELYIDO N'YA!
TATUMCHAT

NAIL pendants are now hot fashion items.

Wearing your faith. . .

From page F1

they're cool.

"We wanted to give people the opportunity to talk about the movie and their faith," he said. "(The nail) is definitely a product that will spur a conversation."

Robinson insists the souvenirs are not being marketed like Hulk action figures.

"We had the opportunity to distribute them in mass market retailers," Robinson said. "But we've focused on Christian bookstores because we believe the message behind the product can best be conveyed in those types of environments."

Movie fans have been storming local bookstores in search of the items in a mania store owners say will continue through Easter.

The prices range from about $3 for the pewter cross pocket reminders and lapel pins to $24.99 for "The Passion," a book produced by Tyndale publishers, featuring movie set photos. The nail pendants are about $17.

"We have everything that has to do with the movie available so people can use them to spread the Gospel," says Stacy Carlton, store supervisor of Berean Christian Store in Littleton.

The store sold 30 books in two days and has ordered 100 more.

"We had to overnight deliver because of how fast they were moving," says Steve Lynam, owner of Silver Screen Souvenirs booths located in the lobbies of two Colorado Cinema theaters in Aurora and Arvada.

The souvenir concept is aimed at accomplishing the same result that members of Friendship Assembly in Colorado Springs did when they handed out impact cards with church information on them after the movie premiere.

"The purpose is so that when people ask about it, we have a chance to share about Christ," said Tom Craddock, Friendship Assembly's associate pastor.

Paul Janke, assistant director of the Chinese Stadium 16 at Arapahoe Crossings Shopping Center in Aurora, said he purchased a lapel pin for himself and a coffee mug for his wife because the powerful film touched his heart.

"I'm not a good Christian," Janke said. "But this movie was so moving that maybe if someone asks me about the (lapel) pin, I might be able to explain it all."

Chuck Lawson said he would buy the movie's pocket cross reminder.

"I had a cross in my pocket for four years straight," says Lawson, who saw "Passion" last week. "Every morning when I got up and every night ... I would touch that cross. It reminded me of why I am here—because Jesus died on the cross for me."

Gruesome and gothic

Paulette Tyma's breath caught in her throat when she spotted a display of the nail pendants.

"It's so gruesome and gothic. I don't like the appearance of this at all," Tyma said. "This takes away the spiritualness of it all."

Megan Dunlap, 14, said none of her peers would wear the nail.

"It gives me bad memories of what they did to him, of the pounding of the nail into his hand," Dunlap said. "It looks so violent. It's kinda sad, really."

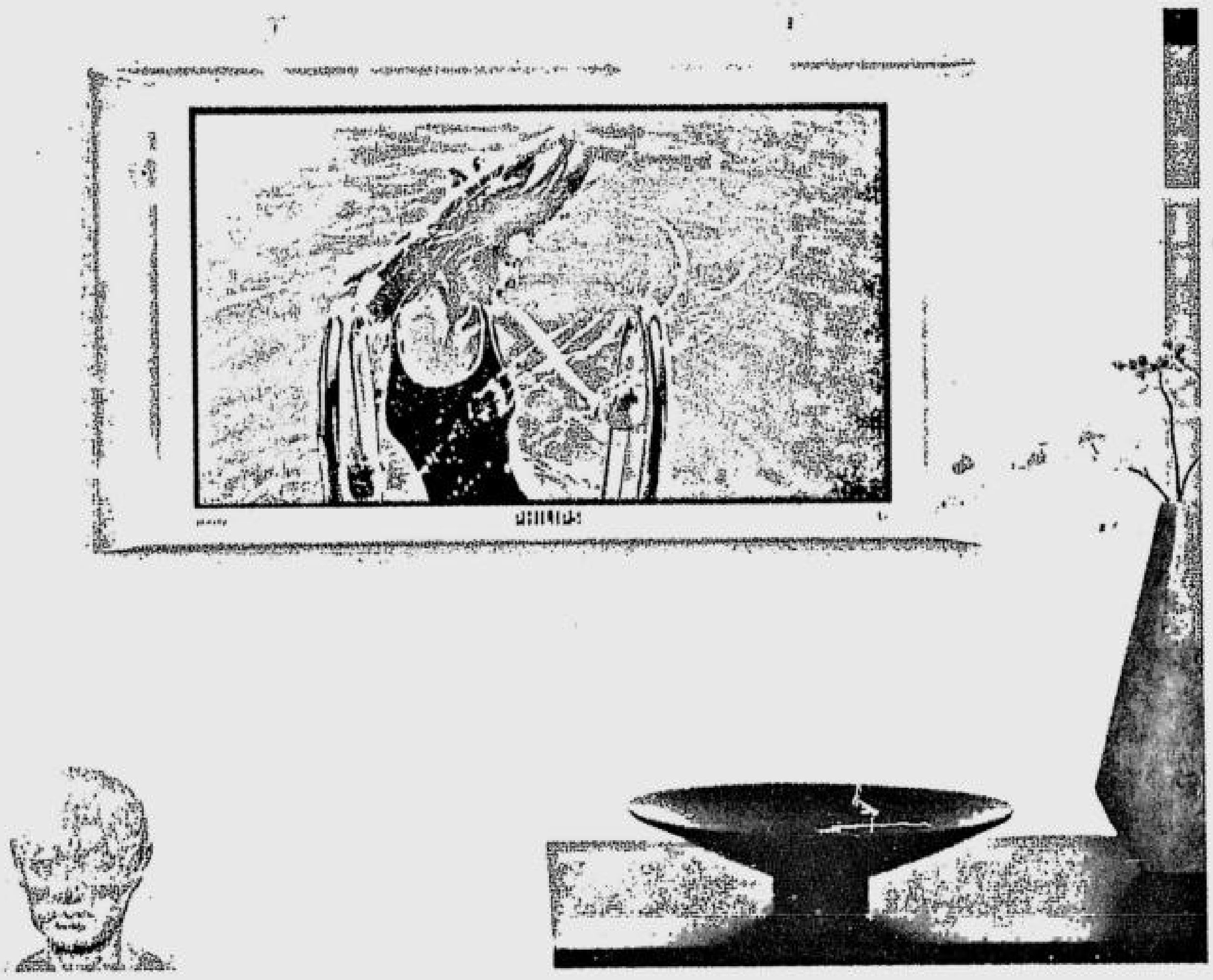
Some ministers said you can't tell if the person wearing the nail is witnessing for Christ or setting a fashion trend.

"I don't think wearing a nail pendant is an effective method of evangelism," said Dave Runyon, pastor of the Warehouse 180 student ministries at Foothills Community Church in Arvada.

The Denver Post

PHILIPS
Let's make things better.

"I'm sorry, I've got some details to attend to."



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- Mar. 10 to Mar. 28, BPI Installment Madness, Activity Center, Glorietta
- Mar. 15 to Mar. 28, Anson's, Alabang Town Center
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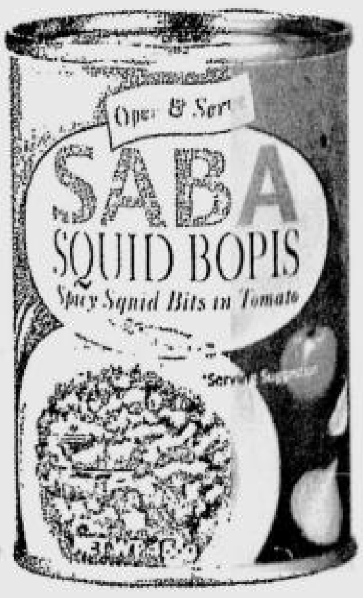
- Automatic Center, 3rd Level, Glorietta 4, Makati City
- Automatic Center, Ground Floor, Shoppesville Center, Greenhills, San Juan
- SM Appliance Center, Main Building, SM North Edsa
- SM Appliance Center, Ground Floor, SM City Pampanga
- SM Appliance Center, 4th Level, The Podium, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

BOPIS
PAG BIYERNES?



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www.oceanadventure.com.ph

VIEW of the Gucci store on Fifth Avenue THE NEW YORK TIMES

Gucci tailors own design team to replace Ford

AMSTERDAM/PARIS—Italian luxury goods house Gucci Group has named four lesser-known in-house designers to replace Tom Ford, the star fashion creator who bowed out at the weekend.

PPR chief executive Serge Weinberg said during a conference call that talks with candidates to replace De Sole were "very advanced," and the new head would be picked before his departure.

Gucci appointed Alessandra Facchinetti as creative director of Gucci women's fashion, John Ray as creative director for Gucci men's fashion and Frida Giannini as creative director of accessories such as leather bags.

"Alessandra, John and Frida are incredibly talented, and each one has made significant contributions to Gucci's current success," said Giacomo Santucci, CEO for the Gucci brand.

Stefano Pilati was named creative director of Yves Saint Laurent Rive Gauche, reporting to Mark Lee, who is president and chief executive of the Yves Saint Laurent fashion brand.

YSL is Gucci's number two brand, which the group is building up to rival Chanel and Christian Dior.

Analysts said the new Gucci team, which worked closely with Ford, would secure continuity for the brands but could lack the sparkle of the man who used sex to sell everything from handbags to yoga mats.

Gucci Group, the number three luxury firm in the world after LVMH and Richemont, also has designers Stella McCartney and Alexander McQueen in its line-up.

Dream team

The new appointees step into the most high-profile jobs in the cut-throat luxury arena. They face the challenge of maintaining the character and commercial success of a brand onto which Ford said he had "grafted his own personality," while the group is integrated with PPR.

While PPR has never publicly commented on why talks with Ford and De Sole broke down, Ford said in a recent interview that control rather than money was an issue.

Gucci has always vehemently defended its independence, fighting a creeping takeover bid by luxury goods giant LVMH on the bourse and through the courts. Billionaire Francois Pinault finally stepped in with a white knight bid that won Gucci several more years of freedom.

Reuters

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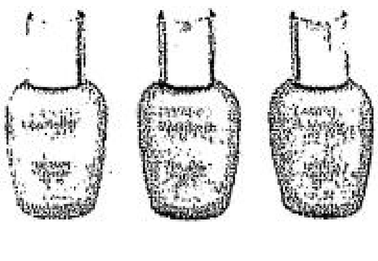


EXUVIANCE Skin Caring Foundation SPF 15

REVLON Fantasy Mascara

PRÉCISION
ÉCLAT ORIGINEL
CRÈME ÉCLAT MAXIMUM
MAXIMUM RADIANCE CREAM
CHANEL

CHANEL Maximum Radiance Cream

ESTEE LAUDER

VMV Light Brilliance, Revlon Moisturous Lipstick and Estee Lauder Electric Intense Lip Creme

Beauty essentials for summer

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

THE MAKEUP diva is back! I have just finished road testing makeup essentials for the summer months, so after straying from my favorite topic for quite some time, I'm back with loads of stuff to share with you.

Only four basic items are needed in your makeup kit: foundation, mascara, lipstick and powder.

Foundation

Foundation is the most essential, as the right formula will hold everything together as long as possible.

For summer, aim for those with no heavy caking powder, but light and sheer to medium coverage in matte finish that lasts all day. Also, preferably with SPF, in liquid form, and would be undetectable on your skin. Here are my finds.

Medium coverage for normal to oily skin that goes on liquid and dries to powder: Exuviance Skin Caring SPF 15. This has a mango vanilla scent and contains Polyhydroxy acid, a mild exfoliator. Available at certain derma clinics only.

Joey Pure Pore Minimizer Foundation—looks really sheer but pores are covered. Estee Lauder Ideal Matte SPF 8—in mousse form initially. Estee Lauder Whitelight Ex with SPF 25++—evens out complexion by erasing discolorations and protecting skin from the sun.

Sheer liquid for normal to dry skin, which hydrates without leaving you greasy: Clarins Perfect Makeup Start. This product is meant to be placed before foundation to take skin as close to perfect as possible.

If your skin is fairly decent and you are a fan of Prescriptives Traceless (for very dry skin) during the cold months, this time of year is perfect to wear it alone.

Colorless but mattifies and evens out complexion: Chanel Maximum Radiance Cream, which can be used as a primer, or alone as the foundation. It's a treatment that leaves your skin glowing even after the foundation is gone.

Shiseido Sheer Enhancer Base 1 (opalescent white): Brightens all skin tones without making you look pasty.

Lipsticks

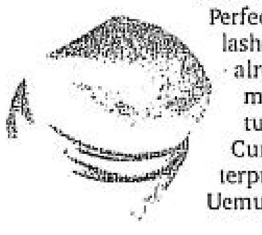
Lipsticks should hydrate and stay fairly long, plus their texture should be between sheer and creamy without being greasy.

My finds and suggested colors: Revlon Moisturous—Plum Wet, Mauve Moist, and Orchid Mist. Shiseido Perfecting Lipstick—Honey Rouge (a dark sexy red). Chanel Hydrabase—Orient (rosey rust). VMV Light Brilliance Weightless lipstick—Cherry Tomato (rust brown). Estee Lauder Electric Intense Lip Crème—Fixation (nude beige mauve). Bobbi Brown Shimmer Gloss stick—Burnt sugar (beige pink shimmer). And MAC Lipglass Tasti—dessert-flavored (mocha, vanilla, raspberry, etc.) with a richly pigmented gloss.

Mascara

A good mascara does not smear, smudge or clump but defines, lengthens and thickens individual lashes. Plus, it should be preferably waterproof.

Try these good finds: Revlon Fantasy Mascara—contains a lash conditioning primer on one end, and a color-defining brush on the other end. Perfect for sparse Asian lashes, as those with already thick lashes may get the tarantula look. Fasio Curl extension waterproof mascara. Shu Uemura length and waterproof-squared mascara brush—ensures that each lash is coated individually from tip to end without clumping. L'Oreal Lash Architect—the closest you can get to false eyelashes. Estee Lauder Magnascopic waterproof—holds the curl of stubbornly straight lashes while volumizing and lengthening.



PRESCRIPTIVES Traceless Skin Responsive Powder

SHISEIDO Luminizing Brush Powder

Powders

Powder is there not just to set makeup and for retouching, but also to draw attention to one's skin.

Shimmer powder for face and body with built-in giant brush: Shiseido Luminizing powder, I-nuovi shimmer powder, and Bodyshop Brilliance Powder (in two colors; the light color brightens and the other one is a bronzer).

Built-in puff: Prescriptives Traceless Skin Responsive Powder—does not require you to remove the puff, but it's advisable to blot the oils before retouching so bacteria won't breed in it.

YSL's Touche Blushe powder blush comes in three shades—N1 Rose, glow N2 Coral and tan N3Spice—which can be used all over the face for a natural flush.

Some extras: Lip and cheek gel tint from Body shop, which gives you a youthful, flushed glow. High school girls use this on bare skin and their teachers or parents think they've just ran or exercised.

For Exuviance inquiries, call 0917-5222826 or e-mail dmark888@info.com.ph

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THE AMBASSADOR and the chef. InterCon's grand French chef, Cyrille, with France's grand Ambassador, *tres charmante* Renée Veyret

NIGHTLIFE king Louie Ysmael and InterCon's popular GM, Stefan Voogle

GORGEOUS model Joanne Bitagcol and Chalk magazine editor Romina Urra

WINNERS in their respective fields. Kitkat Silverio Zobel, who bagged a Caribbean Cruises raffle prize, and in-demand architect and interior designer Anton Mendoza

PRESTIGE Cars BMW president José Alvarez with wife, head-turner Maricris Luzuriaga

Here comes the sun and summer fashion

PRINCESS Cruises president Eve Cayaban

INTERCON'S director for sales and marketing Carmela Bocanegra

RUSTAN'S young achievers. Dino and Marivic Pineda with Paolo Pineda

THE GANG of three. Dazzling Mary Prieto with Rustan's top designer Criselda Lontok and brilliant Josie Lichauco

SUPER pals. Popular Toffer Vidal with Sigalit Djemal and Raul Manzano

EMBASSY row's gals. Madame Gul Tanghe from the Belgian embassy, Agnes de Kok of the EU and InterCon's Marge Medina

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** on **Kodak Max**

THE country's premier chic lifestyle hub, Rustan's Department Store, led by its indefatigable president, **Bienvenido Tantoco Jr.**, officially marked the start of the sizzling summer season with a spectacular fashion event, "Rush into the Sun," at the breezy poolside of the first lady of Makati's hotel row, Hotel InterContinental Manila, together with de luxe lifestyle giants Prestige Cars BMW and Princess Cruises.

A superb cocktail menu was prepared by Hotel InterContinental's excellent chefs, and booze from Ralph's Wines and Spirits and Rustan's Wines overflowed.

Vivaciously fun **Tessa Prieto-Valdes**, fabulously dressed in a distinctive Caribbean-inspired outfit by Rustan's award-winning designer **Dennis Lustico**, was the snazzy hostess of the night, *palanggas*, welcoming the colorful mob.

Singing wonder **Carlo Orosa**, with the cast of Stages, Inc., belted out upbeat tunes of the summer by **Harry Belafonte**.

Caribbean songs were heard everywhere, while limbo dancing and a sultry Jamaican flirtation dance added heat to the steaming event.

Car of the season

BMW, led by its young business whiz of a president, **José Alvarez Jr.**, who was accompanied by his beautiful wife, **Maricris Luzuriaga**; and VP for marketing **Maricar Parco** showcased the latest BMW Z4 for everyone's appreciation.

That travel and recreation line, Princess Cruises, had its dynamic president **Eve Cayaban**, who raffled a—wow!—seven-day Caribbean Cruises for two.

It was won by the oh-so-lucky invitee, super-excited **Kitkat Silverio Zobel**, who was absolutely thrilled when her name was called, and screamed all the way as she rushed to the stage from the back of the poolside.

"I've never won anything before. This is too much," she said in glee, dahlings. The dashing GM of Hotel InterContinental Manila, tall charmant **Stefan Voogle**, awarded a luxurious three-day, two-night stay at the hotel to lucky sultry beauty **Angelique Villaraza**, attractive **Kathy Lichauco** and socialite **Helen Ong**.

"Rush into the Sun" had a spectacular eye-catching fashion display of fab kaleidoscope colors by Rustan's brands. It was directed by everyone's fashion darling, **Jackie Aquino**, no less, *palanggas*.

Hot labels for hot days

Ladies' fashion reigned supreme when clothes from Rustan's hot labels like Muchacha, Sinequanone, Caramelo and Tocca were showcased alongside pieces from equally chic Private Labels for those lazy days of strolling on the beach.

The stylish and casual designs of 4YOU and Salt presented a fresh approach to masculine fashion, as they shared the limelight with the world's leading men's brand, Zegna Sports.

Manille's fine young things were absolutely delighted with Rustan's lineup for the hip and active, like Private Labels, U's Men and Girls, and YVIP.

For the little ones, the oh-so-cute pieces from Jam and Baby Club create a refreshing look for summer—bold, vibrant and unquestionably sunny.

LET'S go Caribbean. Rustan's chair Ambassador Bienvenido Tantoco Sr., Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Rustan's board member Maritess Tantoco

Rustan's board member, world traveler, brilliant **Maritess Tantoco**, and fashionable **Vida Estrella**, Rustan's secret weapon who is VP for marketing services; InterCon's rah-rah cybersmart directors **Carmela Bocanegra** and **Irma Javier**; with PR whiz **Jenny Peña**, and hotshots from embassy row, plus tons of other hot-hot names, *palanggas*, all swayed to the sizzling sounds of the Caribbean.

Party animals

Loads of beauties and hunks, today's hot names on the party scene, enjoyed Summer Cooler cocktail drinks while mixing with stylish Middle Eastern gourmet chef **Sigalit Djemal**; Air France's *tres charmant*, well-loved GM **Louis Vergeon**; **Ciara Sevilla**; stunningly beautiful **Charlotte Teodoro**; **Audrey Tan** without her **Miguel Z.**; **Lexi Schulze**; **Raj Moreno**; **Jaco** and **Ricky Yupangco**; vivaciously fun **Chi Chi Silverio**; young gent of taste **Paolo Martel**; INQUIRER's eligible bachelor **Paolo Prieto**; Shu Uemura's hot babes **Xeng Zulueta** and **Tina Tinio**; swinger **Mike Luakian**; **Markus Schmidt**; **Emerson Yao**; **Chris** and **Katrina Goulbourn-Feist**, plus others just as beautiful as them and some not-so-beautiful ones, all having a real blast!

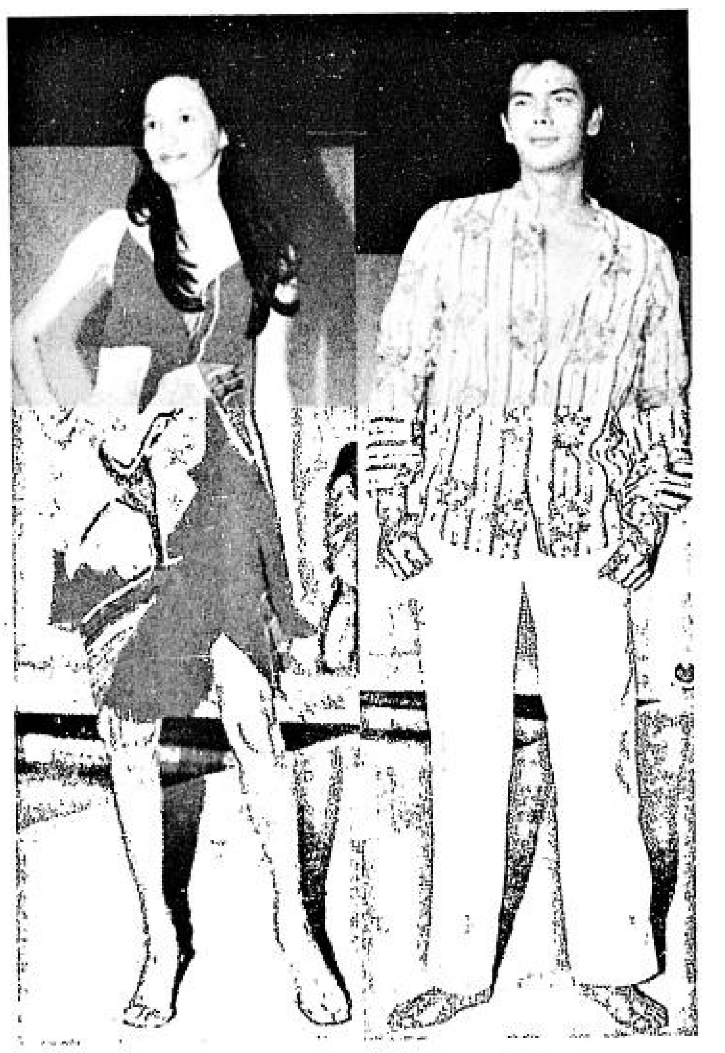
At one point, *moi* chatted about travel with a mega businessman holding a glass of vodka on the rocks. He told me, "You know what, **Maurice**, I know this fellow who was able to beat the system." How, I asked?

"He took a go-now-pay-later plan and never came back."

Then he talked about his nice wife. "My wife is always talking about a trip to Europe. I really have no objections. I just let her talk and talk and talk," he said, laughing.

Oops, oh well.

Anyway, hey, you guys! Check out Rustan's "Rush into the Sun" and be fashionably cool this hot season.



BREEZY chiffon cocktail dress by Vivenne Tam (left); handsome Dutch-Filipino model Alec van Dierendonck in a cool summer outfit from Salt

HIP movers and shakers. Anna Martha Moreno with Jose Moreno, Tintin Chan, PDI's eligible bachelor Paolo Prieto and exotic looker Clara Sevilla

March toward beauty

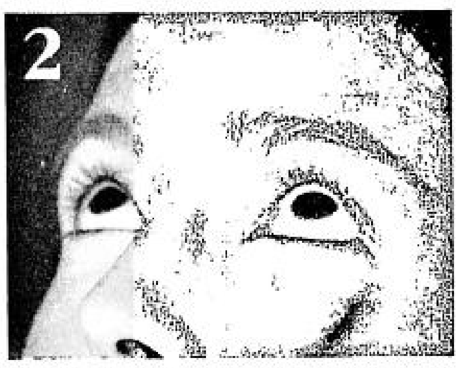
Photos by Joanne Zapanta-Andrada

As summer approaches, the mood is beginning to sizzle and looks are getting hotter, thanks to ace stylists like Edwin Aguilar

MODEL: CATERINA ABOITIZ-JUAN,
CAL CARRIE'S
HAIR AND MAKEUP : EDWIN AGUILAR (09166979839)

1

FOUNDATION is applied. For the model's olive skin, Bumble & Bumble Brilliantine is used.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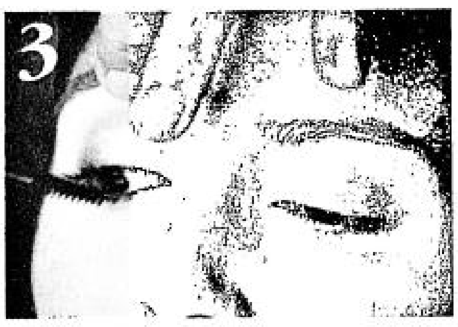
CONCEALER (Max Factor in Bisque Ivory) is used to hide fine lines.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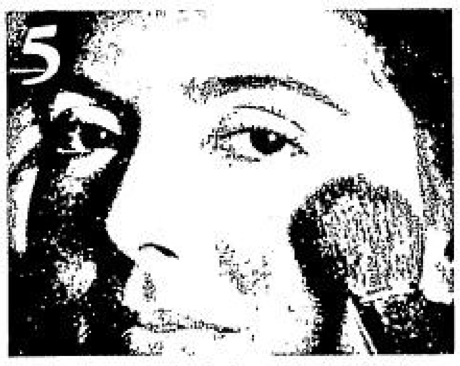
SHIMMERY eye powder (Shiseido Creamy Eye Shadow Duo in Iced Moss) in soft bluish silver is applied. The lids are softly lined in gray. Apply two coats of mascara (Maybelline's Dial-A-Lash).

4

SMUDGE black eye powder (Smashbox Eye Powder) on upper and lower eye area. Gaps in eyebrows are filled through Smashbox Cosmetics Brow Tech.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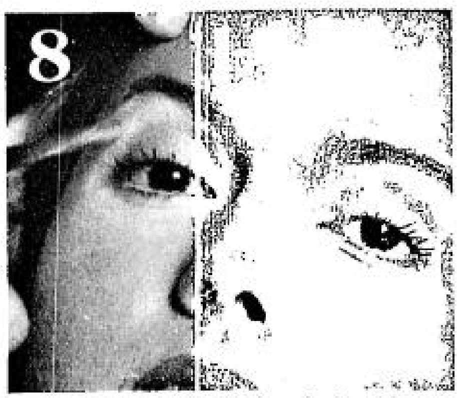
PECHE Intense shade from Blush Subtil is applied with upward and diagonal strokes on the cheeks.

6

LIPS are lined after a quick application of light petroleum jelly using MAC's lip liner in a pink shade.

7

LIPS are filled with Clinique Cream Shine in pink.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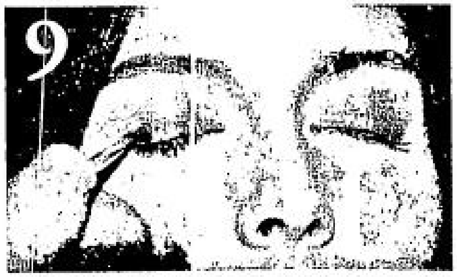
HIGHLIGHTS are applied on the brow bone using VMV eye shadow in white shimmer.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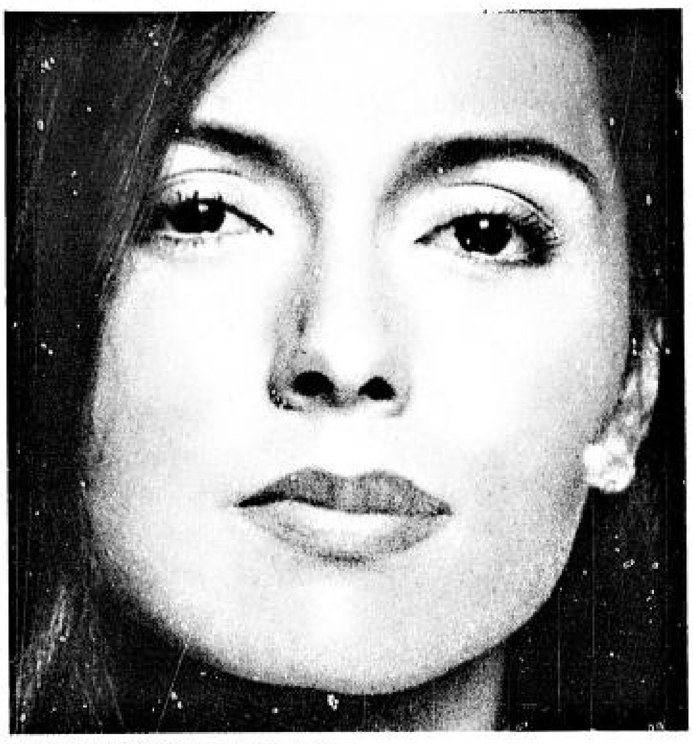
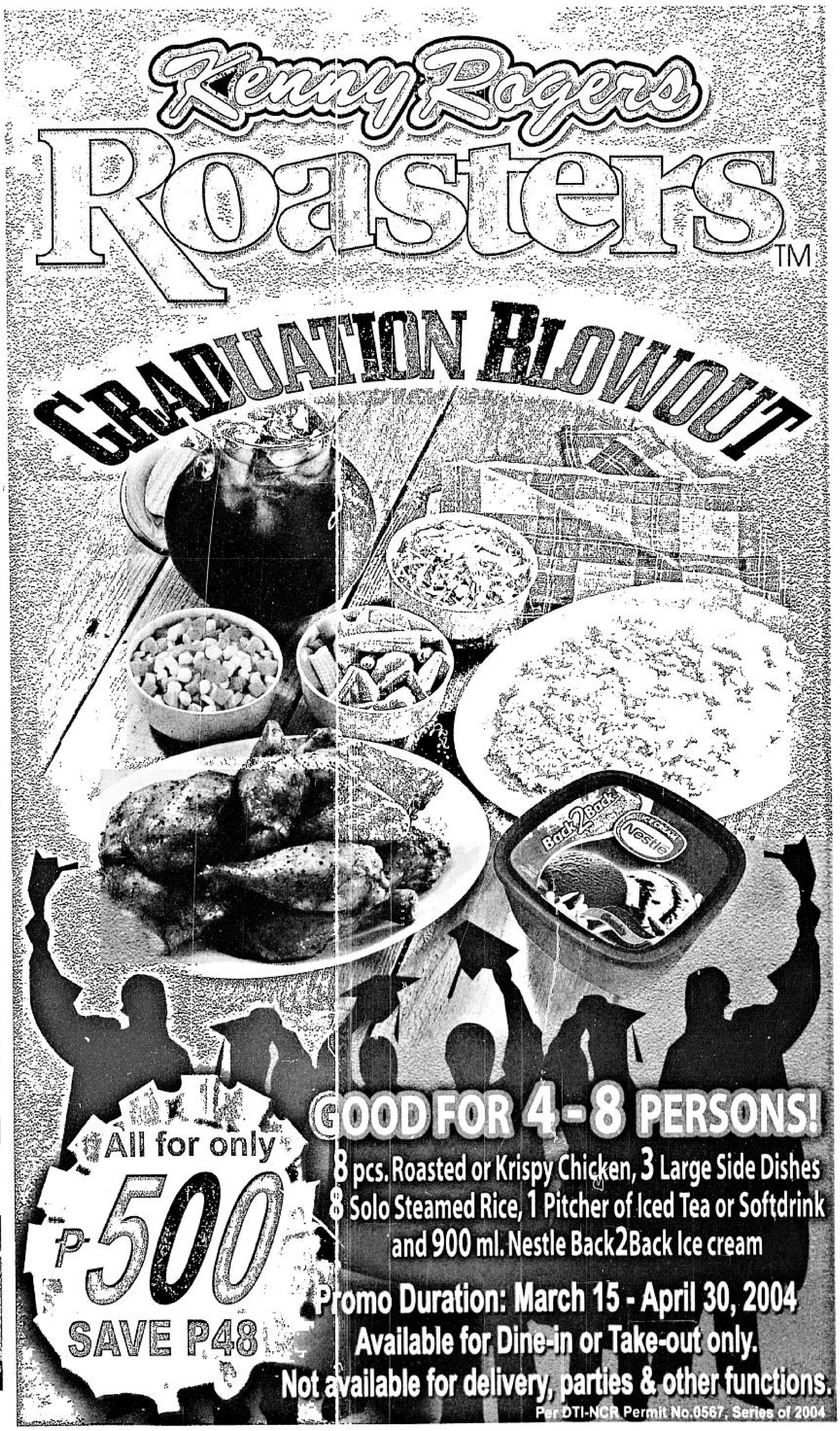
EYELID rims are smudged with black powder (VMV eye shadow in black).



THE SIZZLING look of summer!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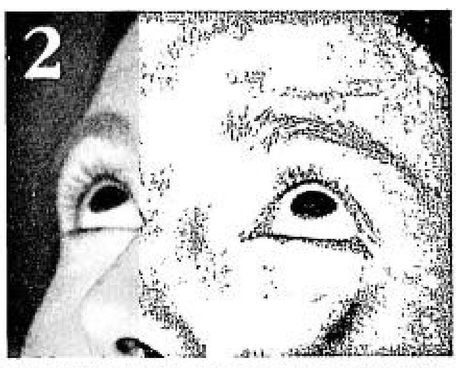

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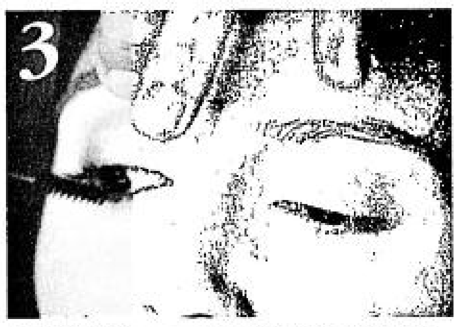

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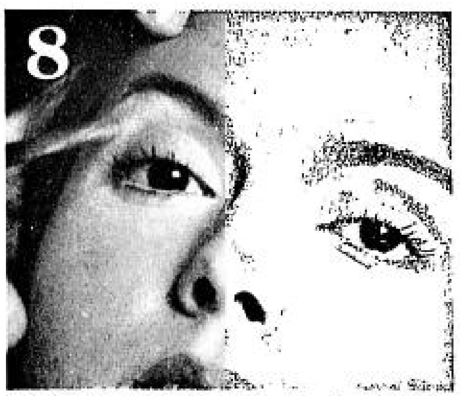

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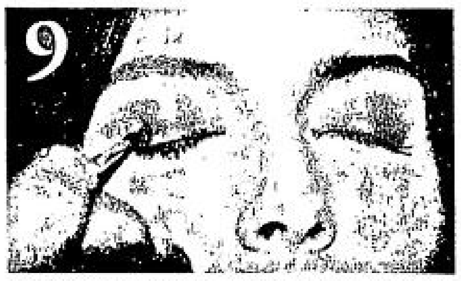

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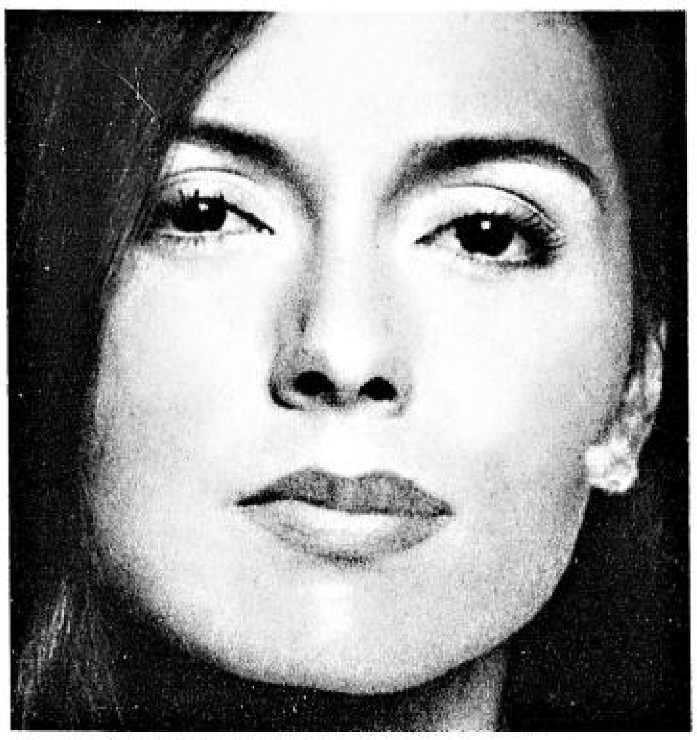

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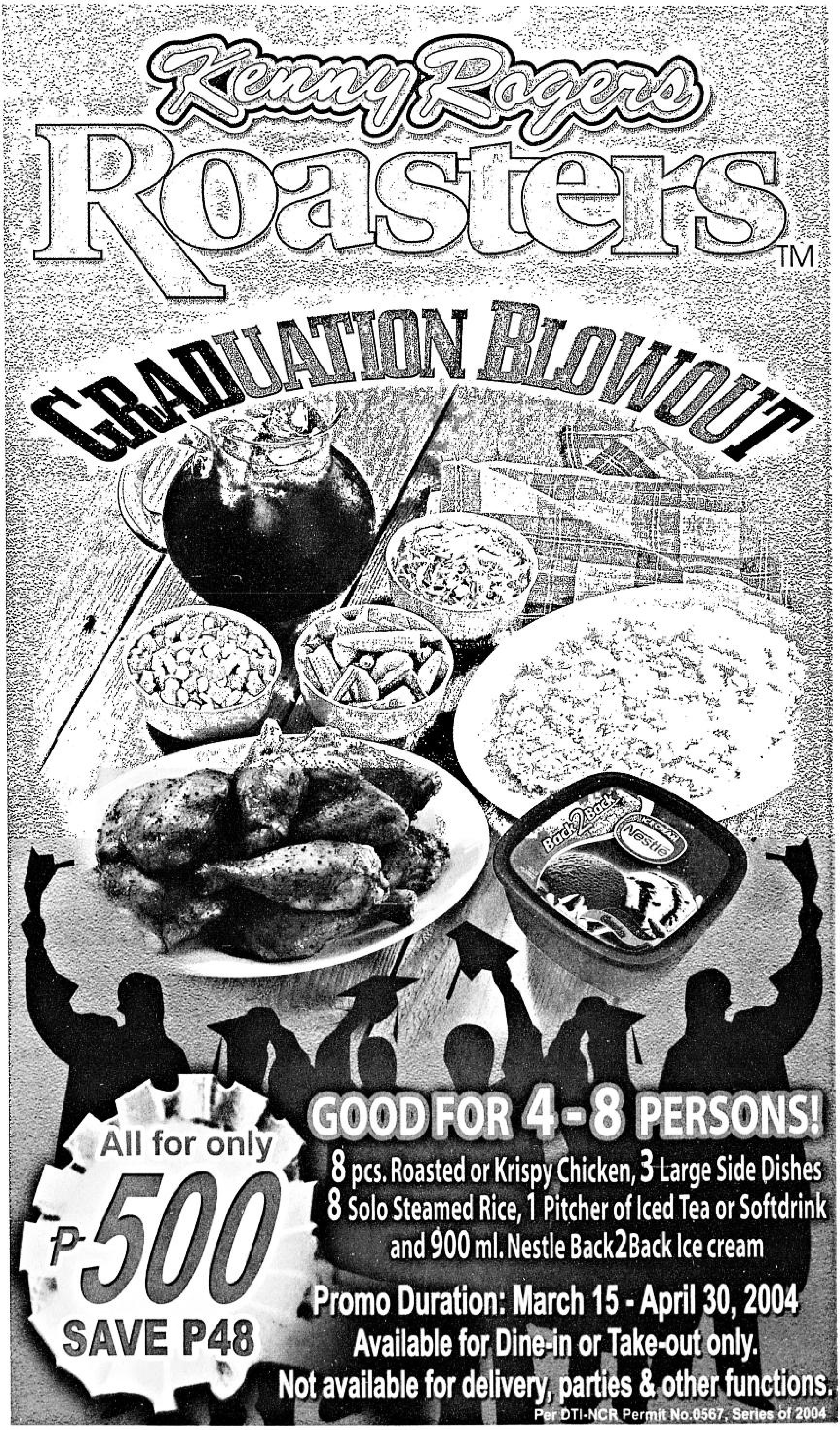

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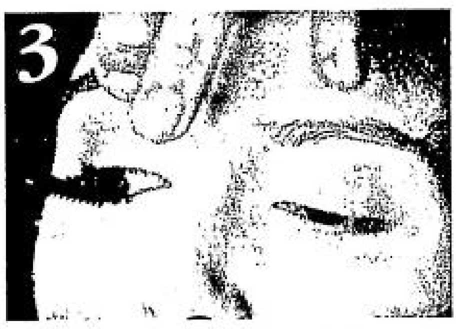

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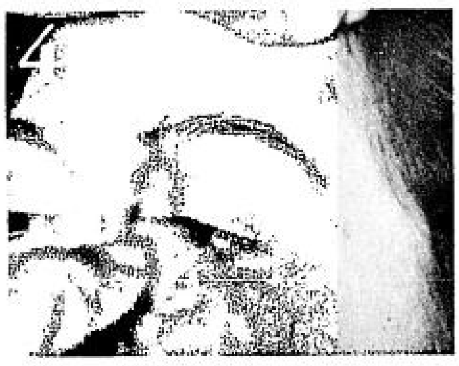

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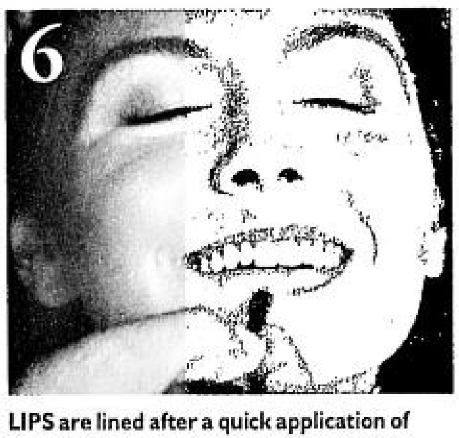

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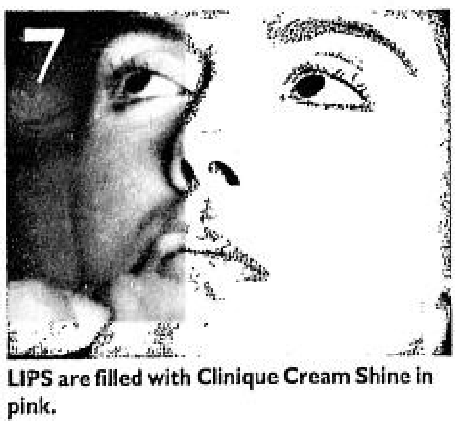

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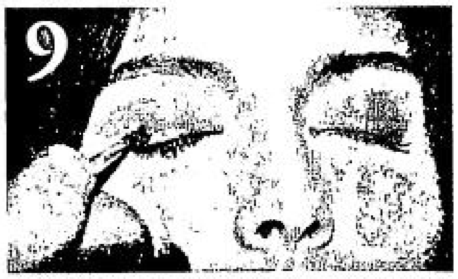

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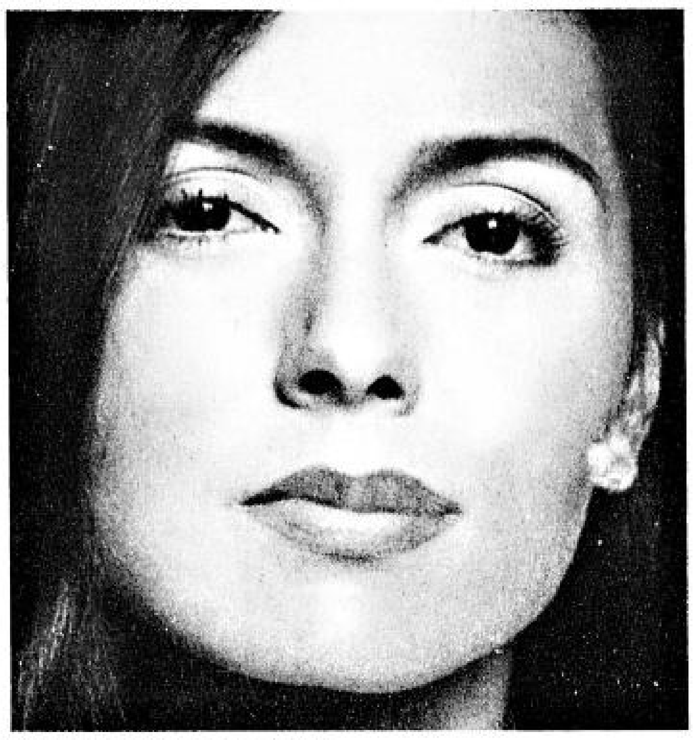

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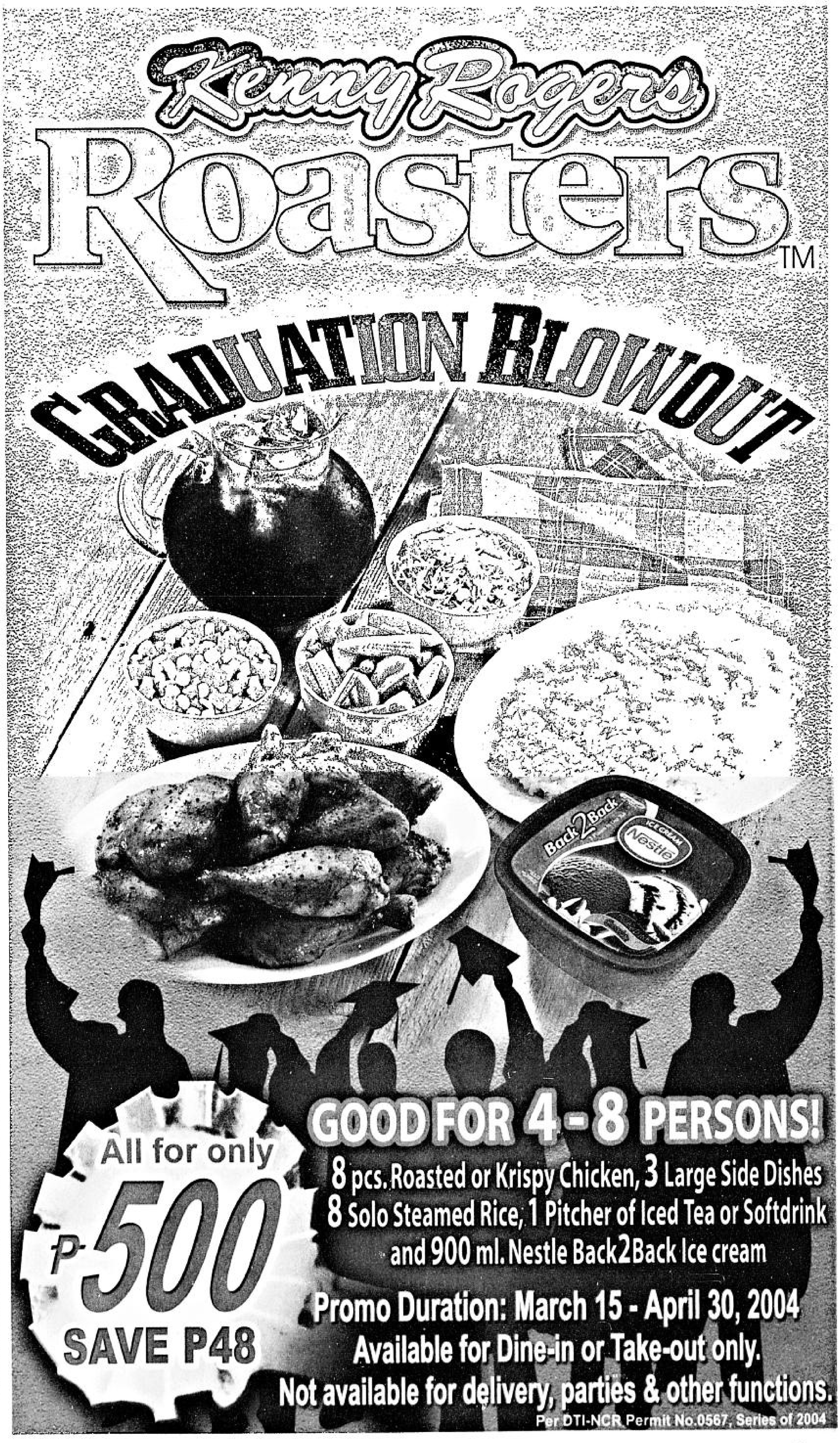
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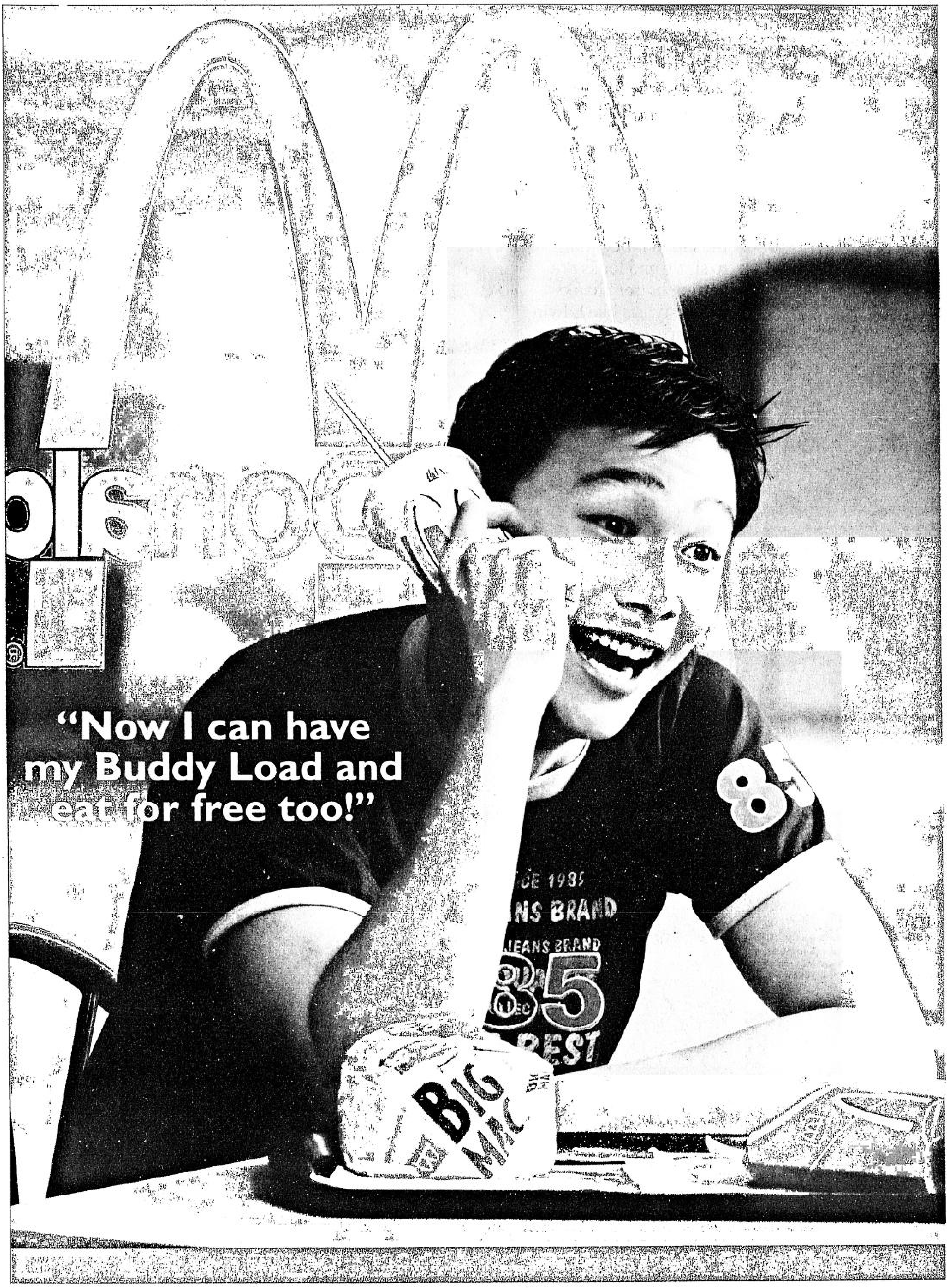
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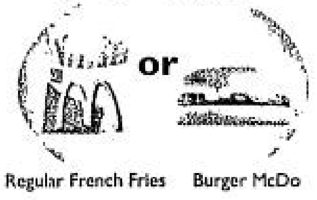
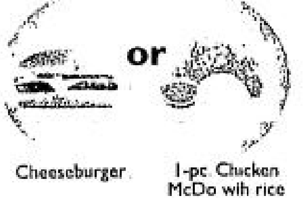


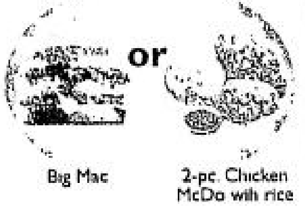
Regular French Fries · Burger McDo

5th load



Cheeseburger · 1-pc. Chicken McDo wih rice

8th load



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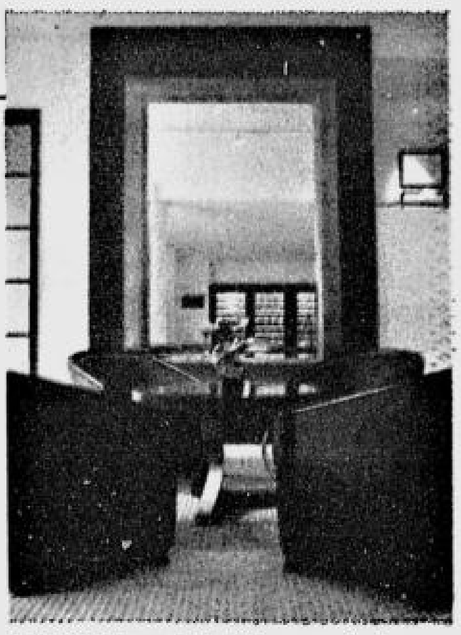
FURNITURE pieces in the living room come in pairs, from the sofas to the ottomans. Disparate shapes and elements featured on the center table break the monotony.



A SITTING area in the living room features a sculpture by Ramon Orlina.

Home sweet new home

Thanks to a talented, designer, a house stuck in an '80s time warp gets a dramatic makeover

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

FROM the warm glow of its ivory walls to its streamlined and symmetrical furniture pieces, this house in one of Makati's exclusive villages is a picture of contemporary chic as envisioned by furniture and interior designer Eric Paras.

Less than six months ago, this very same house, with its white and flamingo pink color scheme, looked anything but current.

"We were like stuck in a time warp," says the owner, a businesswoman and mother of four. "It came to a point when we were already having second thoughts of inviting friends over for dinner. The look was so dated, so very '80s!"

Pink extended to the living room's sofas, wallpaper and area rugs. Even the white tiles had little triangular accents in, yes, pink.

Since the family loves to entertain, the mistress of the house finally decided to have the interiors renovated less than two months before Christmas.

"The transformation was so dramatic," she gushes, "that an old friend of mine had an 'Oprah moment' the minute she entered the door."

Choice of colors

Surprisingly, the structure and most of the furniture pieces found inside it have remained fairly intact. The secret of the transformation is in the choice of new colors.

In lieu of white and pink, Paras chose a more muted color scheme, mostly in ivory and wenge.

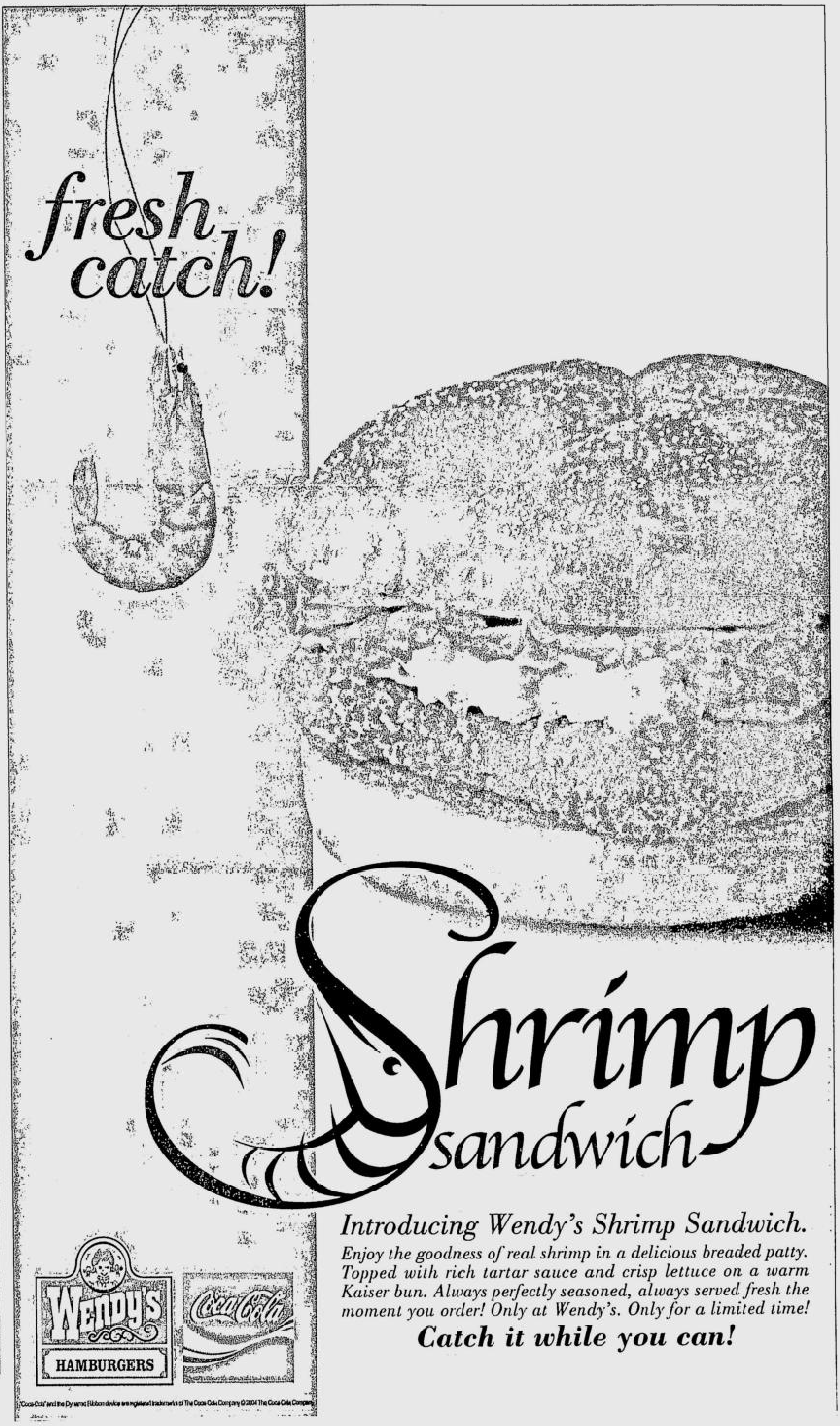
Curtain-less, Japanese-inspired doors and windows, which give the house, especially the dining area, an illusion of added height, were given a fresh coat of wenge. Otherwise, they were left as is to allow natural light to filter in. Earth-colored Roman shades were confined to the dining room and den.

"My family and I moved here 15 years ago," says the owner. "The house, which has remained sound up to now, was built sometime in the 1950s. We had it previously renovated in the late 1980s. I wanted something contemporary without having to change the structure."

After the owner gave Paras a general idea of what she wanted, she left him pretty much

HOME/ H2

THE STAIRS echo a fusion of contrasting elements—wooden steps and stainless steel handrails.



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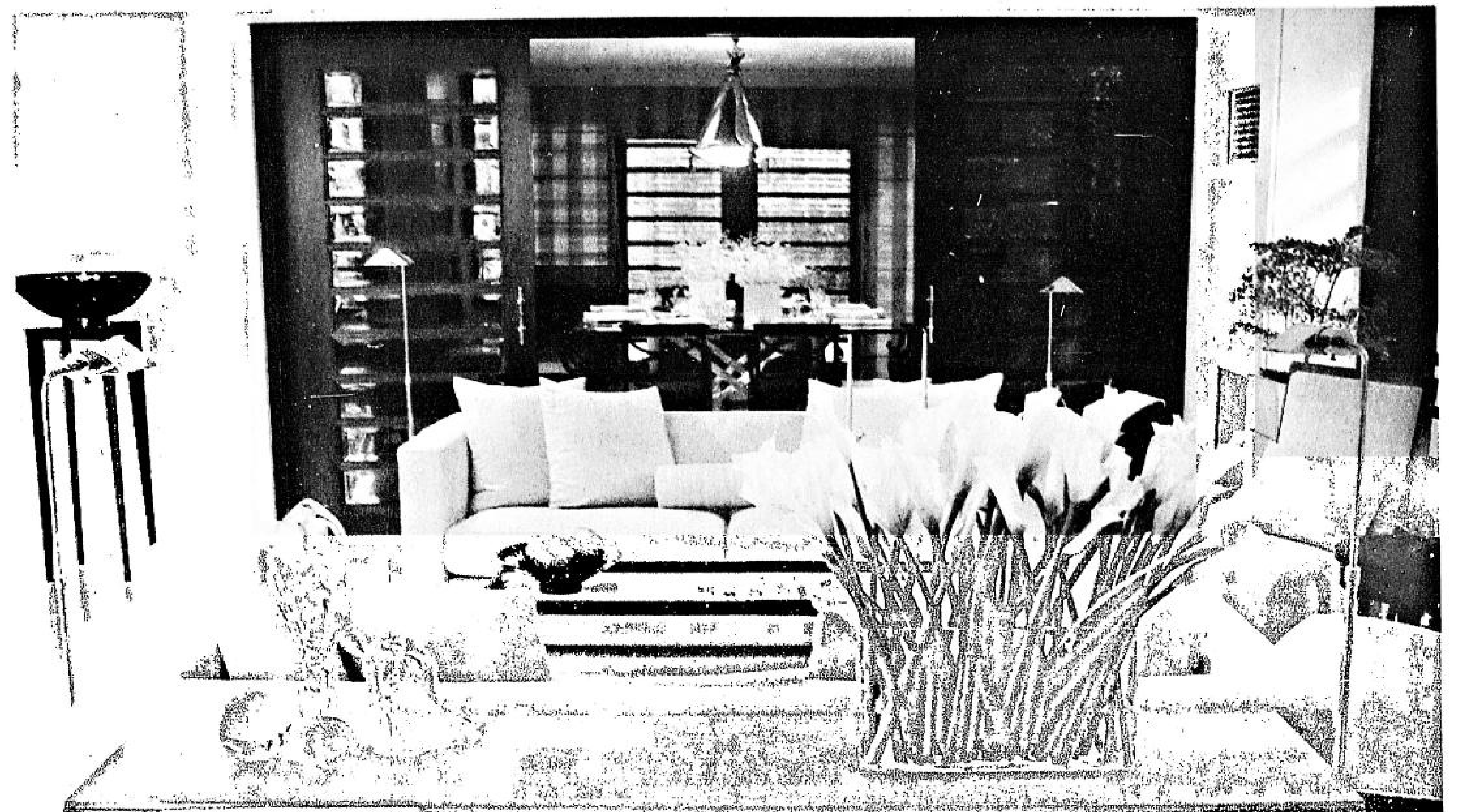
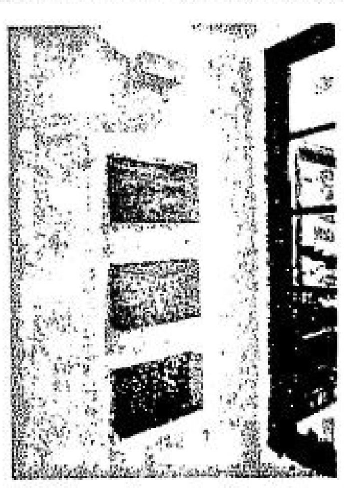


ASIDE from having the furniture pieces reupholstered, Paras had some of them refashioned to give the living room a contemporary look and feel.



WALL accents made of metal

Home sweet new home

From page H1

to do as he wished. Since she hosts regular Bible studies, she only had one request: adequate sitting areas for her friends.

"One of the challenges was to come up with adequate but uncluttered sitting areas," says Paras, who came from a two-week exposure trip to Paris before working on the house.

Since he had to work on a modest budget, chucking every furniture piece in favor of an expensive European brand was out. Instead, he chose to reupholster existing pieces in such colors as charcoal gray and camel. He also had several sofas refashioned to make them look more streamlined and current. To add a modernist touch, sleek but unobstrusive lamps were installed to frame the four corners of the main sitting area.

Symmetry

Paras aimed for symmetry by creating a mirror image of every single piece of furniture—from the sofas to the ottomans—found in the main sitting area.

To keep visitors from yawning, he also tweaked a number of elements featured on the center table and another table behind one of the sofas. Two twisted candlesticks, for instance, contrast with a bowl of shiny balls.

Thanks to his extensive contacts, Paras was able to have several relatively inexpensive glass-topped tables built. The tables, which he himself designed, have one thing in common: they stand on custom-built stainless steel bases that provide a perfect contrast to the neo-classic furniture pieces.

Stainless steel handrails and several abstract sculptures add to the arrangement's contemporary feel.

"The move to mix different styles, instead of coordinating similar styles together, was intentional," says Paras, as he points to the glass-topped dining table. "The sculptural steel base is tempered by the warmth of wenge-finished chairs."

Everything went like clockwork. Owner and designer, however, had reason to pause when it came to the floor. Changing the tiles to something more current meant not only additional cost. It also required more time.

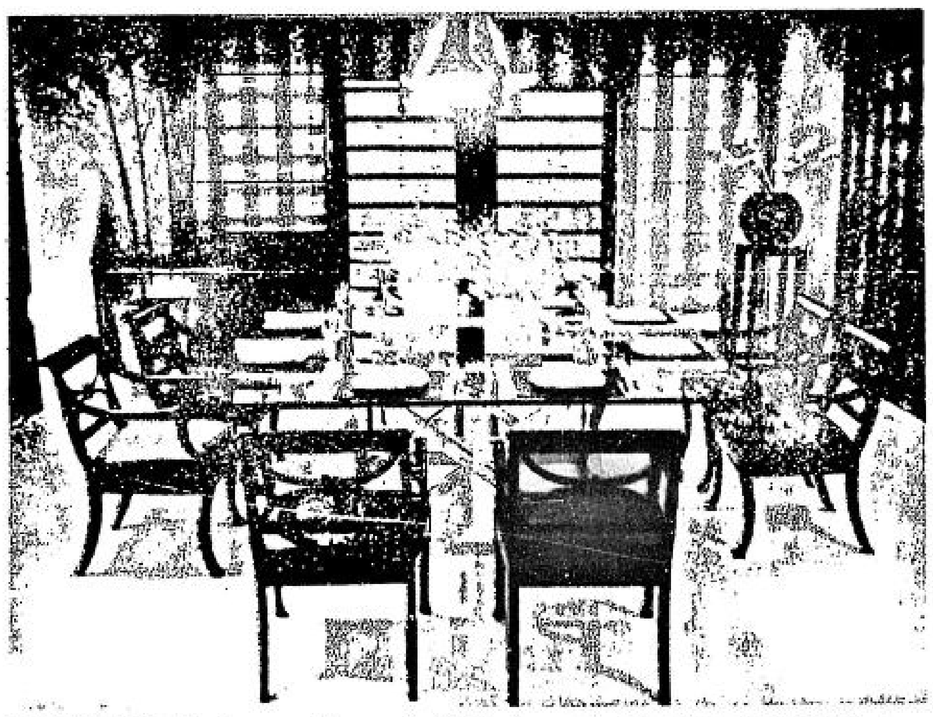
In the end, Paras was able to convince the owner that the old tiles with pink accents had to go.

"We really had to agonize whether or not to proceed," says the owner. "Changing the floor was something we weren't prepared for."

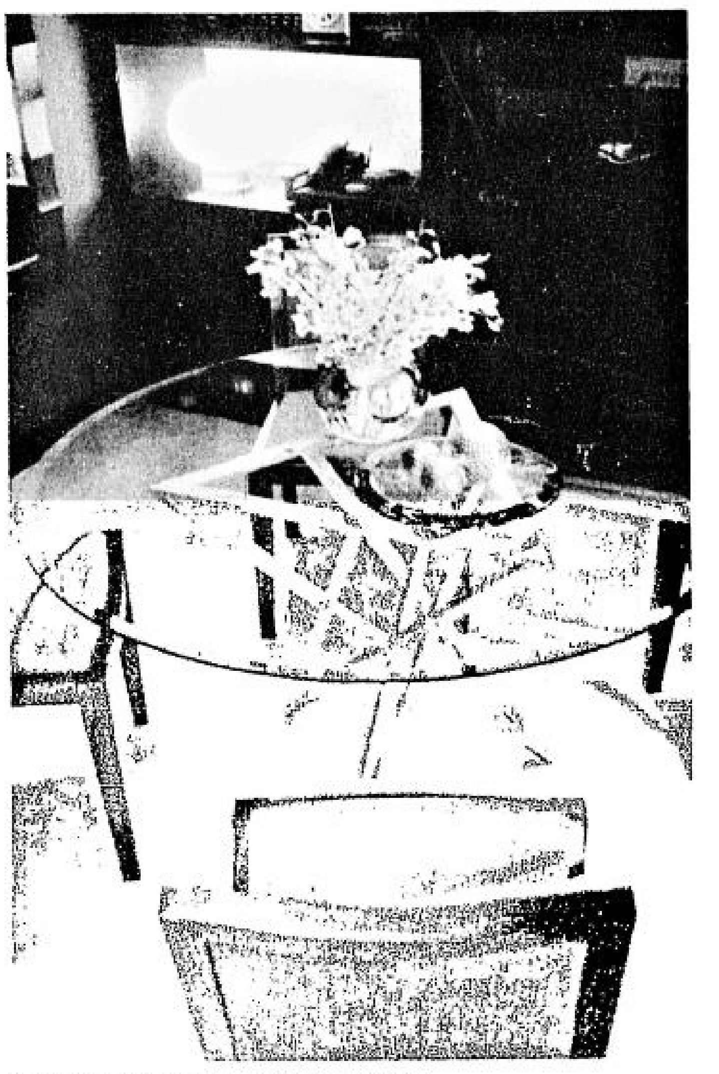
Since they had nowhere to stay during the renovation, they had to brave the noise and dust as workers raced against time to finish the floor before the holidays.

All their sacrifices weren't in vain. In less than a month, after Paras had put the finishing touches to their newly refurbished home, members of the family started having their own Oprah moments.

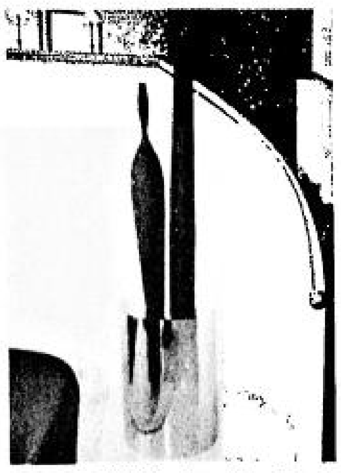
E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph



SCULPTURAL table base provides a perfect foil to the reupholstered neo-classic chairs. Roman shades with vertical stripes soften the corners and add an illusion of height to the dining room's low ceiling.



GLASS-TOPPED table and sculptural base



THE WARMTH of wood and the coldness of steel are combined in this striking accent piece, a pair of upright matte sculptures on a shiny pedestal.

TO keep within the budget, Paras picked alternative fabrics from Divisoria for the den's Roman shades. Still, the look is cozy, elegant and very contemporary.

Reading up on the state of our environment

SEEING GREEN

Doris Gaskell Nuyda

TO UNDERSTAND why we need to know more what causes floods and landslides; why, in general, our so-called rich biodiversity is being depleted everyday, we should take the time to read about them. Boring? Far from it. Nothing could be more exciting than knowing how fully nature has endowed us.

Someone once said that we were a rich country pretending to be poor. The comment was met with derision but he was right. Only he used the wrong words. He should have said, "We are a rich country but don't know it."

But there is no reason for us not to know as there is plenty of environmental literature available. They are attractive reads, too, because they are well laid out, beautifully illustrated, and the information they contain tell us what's going on around the country, and what's being done to conserve what we've got.

Chances are, we wouldn't know those things if we didn't read about them. Most environmental organizations are aware of the need to keep people informed so they send out messages and data on their projects and activities every now and then. These "messages" may come in the form of books, brochures, newsletters and leaflets, made so attractive you can't put them down.

Evolution

One group that puts a premium on its publications is the Haribon Foundation for the Conservation of Natural Resources. In the 30 years since its establishment, it has evolved from a bird watchers' club to a full-scale environment/conservation organization focusing on wildlife and habitat conservation. It also undertakes research and training projects.

Haribon's projects are all over the country. As its main goal is to integrate forest conservation into local governance, it has spread out to different places, many of them far-flung areas, assisting local government units (LGUs) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in building awareness about forest conservation issues and opportunities.

In this task, it has the support of international agencies like the European Community and Birdlife International. Haribon's projects cover just about every area threatened with abuse or extinction. And it is important that what it is doing is reported in its various publications.

Flagship

The small volumes "Envisioning Life" and "Buhay ng Dagat, Buhay ng Mandaragat" (Life of the Sea, Life of the Mariner) are reports on Haribon's Community-Based Coastal Resources Management program. The quarterly magazine, "Haringibon," is the flagship publication and the one with which Haribon is most identified, according to executive director Anabelle E. Plantilla.

Other printed matter is distributed as the urgency of the project demands, or to call attention to specific ones, like the brochure "Forest: Life Saving Grace," which explains in plain words but in an in-depth way, the function of forests. At the rate we are losing our trees, isn't this something we should be constantly reminded of?

Then there is "Nature and Life," a single sheet that utilizes both sides for its features. We find it one of the most attractive leaflets of its kind because it is not only visually attractive with its big photos and illustrations, but it says what needs to be said concisely and to the point.

These publications are issued to interest not just participants or stakeholders, but also the teacher, student, corporation chief executive office, and hopefully, the politician, all of whom will surely need such information at some point in their careers.

Those interested to get a copy of any of these publications may inquire at 4333479/75 or visit the Haribon office, Suites 401-404, Fil Garcia Tower, 140 Kalayaan Ave. corner Mayaman St., Diliman, Quezon City.

Plantilla, who calls herself a frustrated writer, hones this latent skill by writing a column in "Haringibon," and encourages writers, both regular staff members and contributors, to come out with beautiful issues every time. She must be achieving her goal in that respect, judging from the quality of their output. Little extra effort, she feels, is essential to get more people interested in environmental conservation.

Other organizations have their own publications with the same goals—to let people know how valuable their natural resources are and why they must protect them. Most of them need only the funds to produce creative publications and help boost public awareness.

Meanwhile, Haribon is getting set for another activity to call attention to its original concern—birds. On Earth Day in April, it will hold a Bird Kite Festival. The venue will be announced soon.

Correction

Our attention was called to an item in our March 12 column. The Solid Waste Management Law had already been passed, contrary to what we said. What is needed is implementation. We stand corrected.

E-mail the author at dorisnuyda@yahoo.com

> There is plenty of literature out there on the fight to protect and conserve our natural resources—and good reads too

Pollution buster is belle of garden show

THE BIGGEST variety available in the Philippines of a plant that is reputed to be a pollution buster is on exhibit at Los Baños Flower and Garden Show at the University of the Philippines Los Baños, Laguna, until Sunday.

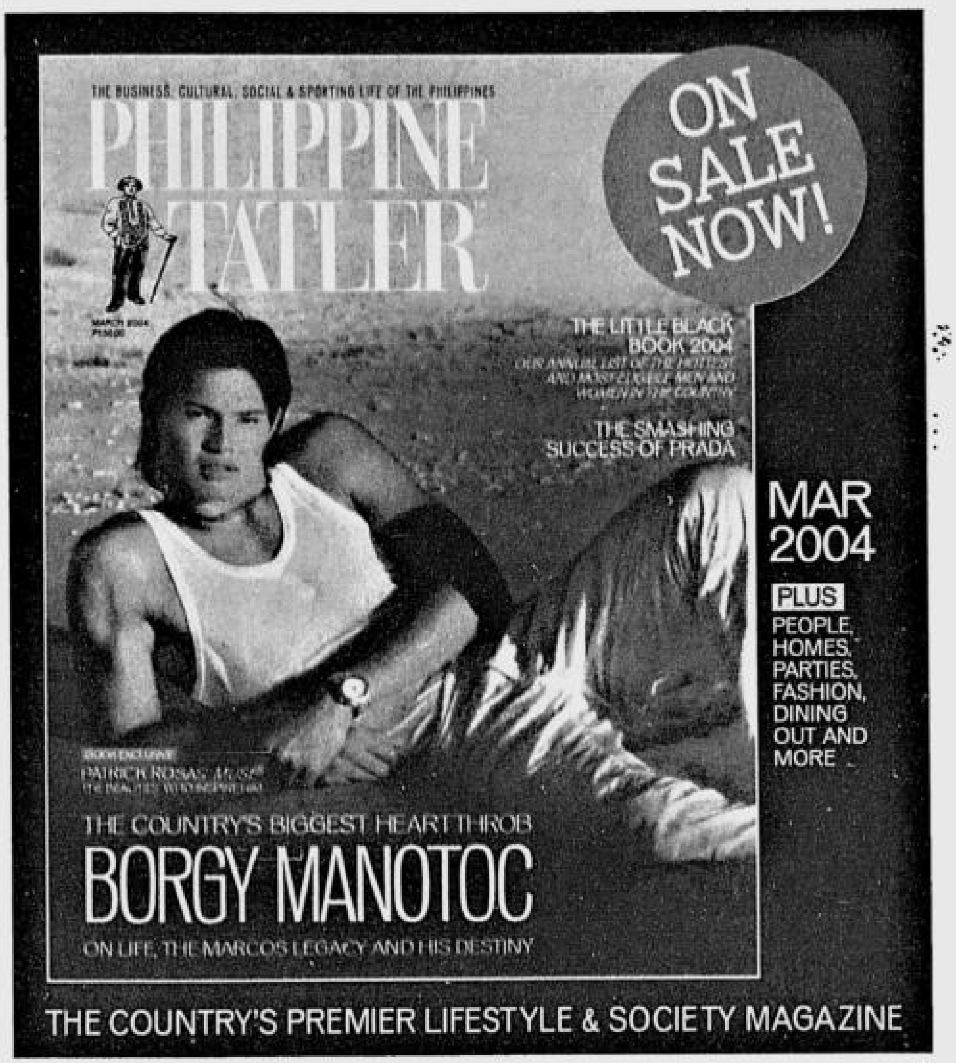
The variety of the *Sansevieria tongei*, known among most local garden enthusiasts as mother-in-law's tongue (some call it sans brother-in-law), has leaves that are at least 100 cm long and 20 cm wide.

Sansevieria tongei has gained greater respectability in recent years because of findings that it has a great capacity for absorbing pollutants to help clean the air.

At the formal opening of the show, the Los Baños Orchid Society honored Dr. Gil Divinagracia and Sister Marie Estelle of the Sisters of St. Paul Chartres. Dr. Divinagracia has contributed to ornamental horticulture through his research on diseases of ornamental plants and as an active member of the LBOS for 30 years.

***SANSEVIERIA* tongei**

Lectures are scheduled this weekend—Saturday, March 20, "Potted Flowering Plants Production and Care" by Mable Chua; and Sunday, March 21, "Landscaping for Small Gardens" by Dr. Leonido Naranja. All lectures start at 2 p.m.



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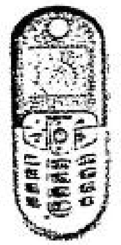

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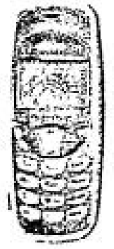

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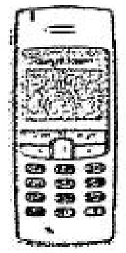

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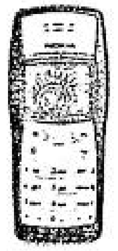

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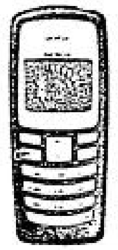

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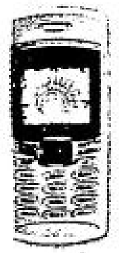

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The long and short of swimsuits

APPLES' PICKINGS

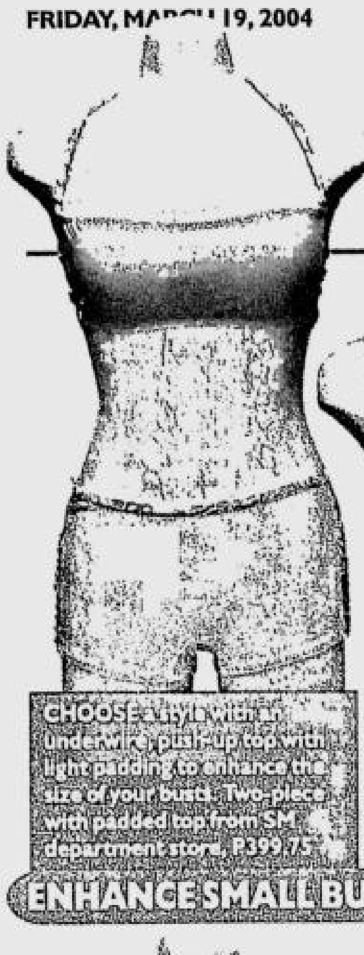
Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

SWIMSUIT shopping need not be a chore. By following some simple and practical rules, which were discussed in last week's column, you can minimize the stress of looking for the right suit.

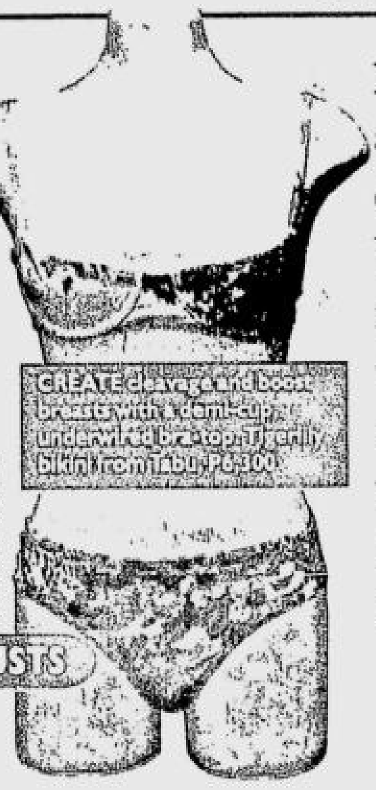
To have an even clearer picture of what will look good on you, here are some figure flatterers to suit various body types.

SWIMSUITS/13

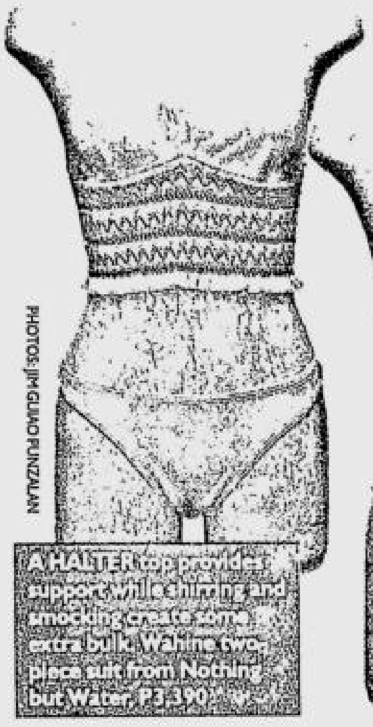
ENHANCE SMALL BUSTS



CHOOSE a style with an underwire, push-up top with light padding to enhance the size of your bust. Two-piece with padded top from SM department store, P399.75



CREATE cleavage and boost breasts with a demi-cup underwired bra-top. Tigerlily bikini from Tabu, P6,300



A HALTER top provides support while shirring and smocking create some extra bulk. Wahine two-piece suit from Nothing but Water, P3,390

BRIGHT colors and details like shirring and ruffles give the illusion of larger breasts. Jazz bikini from Tabu, P3,612

PHOTOS: JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

If you have a short torso, choose a bottom that rides lower than the natural waistline to elongate your body

LENGTHEN A SHORT TORSO

HYDRA one-piece suit from Nothing but Water, P1,823

BAKU two-piece from Tabu, P3,800

CHOOSE bottoms that ride lower than the natural waistline to elongate the torso. The unbroken line of a one-piece will also create the same illusion.

Generally, the goal is to create strong verticals with the use of details, color-blocking, seaming and the like. A high neckline makes the torso appear longer, as well.

LENGTHEN SHORT LEGS

HIGH-CUT legs, whether in a one- or two-piece suit, make gams look endless. Two-piece from Nothing but Water, P1,900

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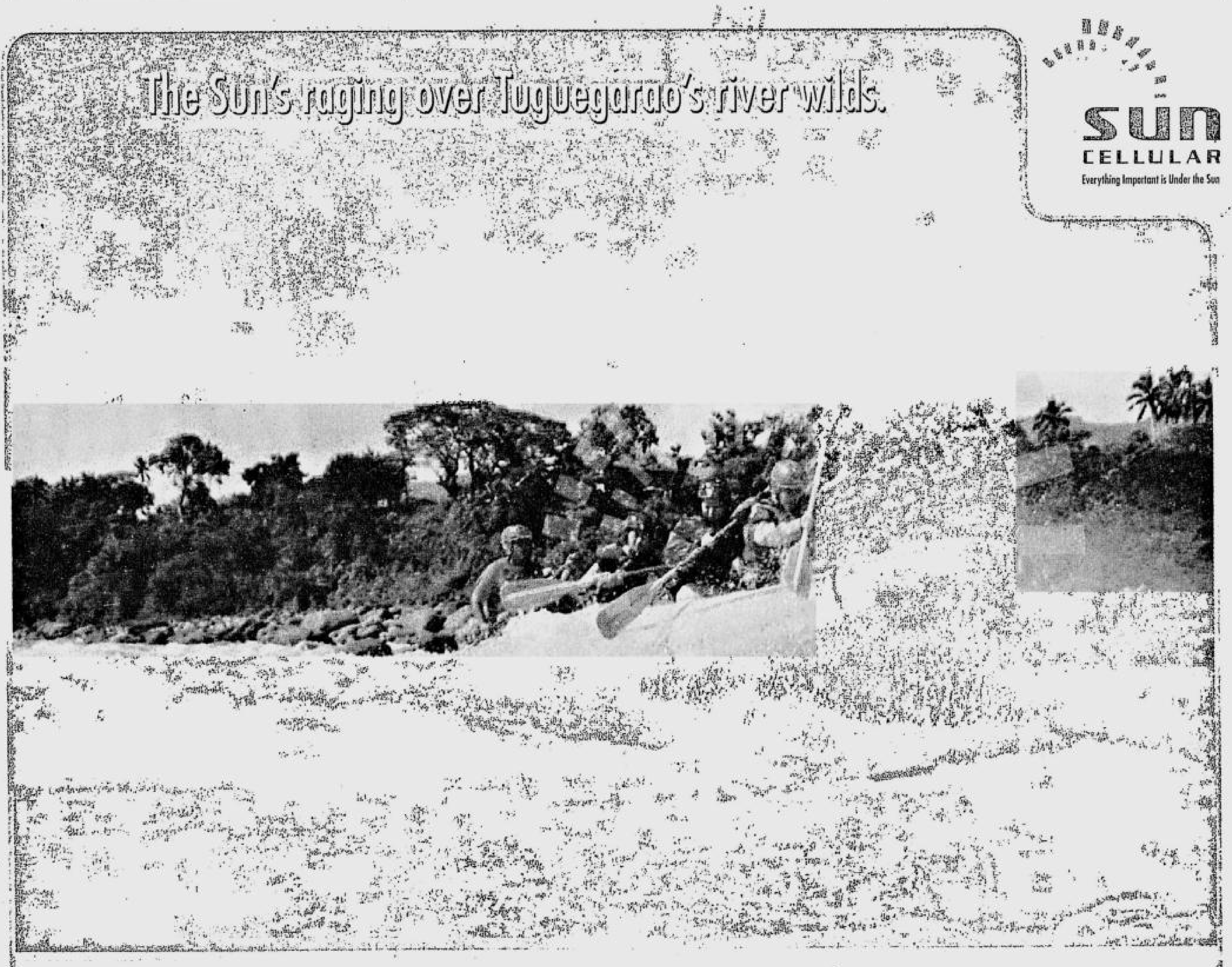
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In Tuguegarao, people are seeing the light of one Sun. Soon, so will the rest of the country.

AMONG THE MANGYANS. On her: Mangyan bandeau top, red hip pants and sling bag. On him: Mangyan *tapis*

Designer Dita Sandico-Ong's latest collection is the first salvo in a campaign to preserve the traditional Mangyan art of 'habol' (fabric)-making

Fashion to the rescue

By Cheche V. Moral

DITA Sandico-Ong isn't averse to technological innovations. She understands the luxury of doing things the easy way, and people's natural fascination for systems quick and new.

When it comes to her craft, however, this fashion designer's insight takes on a different bend. As she expends her artistic energy this time on the traditional Mangyan *habol* (fabric), Sandico-Ong is firm in her resolve that there should be no way but the old way.

She refers to the traditional process of Mangyan weaving that begins with tribe members patiently spinning their own yarn from the *bulak* plant—a method that has sadly given way to technology-aided shortcuts.

Formidable task

Sandico-Ong, with Earthlite Foundation, is working on reviving the old process of making the ethnic fabric. Even better, she uses the fabric in her latest collection. It's a formidable task, but what drives her to pursue the project is a personal and quite sentimental love for the craft and its culture.

The designer spent many holidays of her childhood in faraway Suguicay Island in Oriental Mindoro. Her father, who raised cattle in the area, would take her along on his visits to the island.

There the young girl watched how a tribe of Mangyans undertook the laborious method of *habol* weaving. They rolled wooly *bulak* fibers into thinner strips and skillfully spun them into threads using their crude tools. The threads were then soaked in natural dyes prior to the actual weaving.

Sandico-Ong, who spins her magic in contemporary clothing using *abel Iloko*, banana linen and *piña lino*, credits her love affair with homegrown fabrics to those days in Suguicay.

She may not have realized it before but, yes, the designer acknowledges now, watching the Mangyans weave love into their *habol* was what stirred her creative consciousness to life. Her efforts to preserve this tradition is, therefore, quite understandable.

More alarming than the fact that the Mangyans have taken to using surplus threads from factories in Calapan City, says Sandico-Ong, is the dwindling number of Mangyans who still know and practice traditional weaving.

It had come to this, she thinks, because now "they could easily buy *ukay-ukay*, which is quite cheap."

Five-year plan

Working closely with Lolita Delgado-Fansler of the Mangyan Heritage Center, Sandico-Ong has commenced her five-year plan for the denim-textured Mangyan fabric.

The project aims to "retrain" the indigenous peoples, beginning with the "shortcut" method (using surplus threads), and eventually reintroducing the use of the *bulak*-spun yarn. The program aims not only to preserve the Mangyan heritage but also to provide tribe members with a steady means of livelihood. Hence, the first goal is to put up a weaving center.

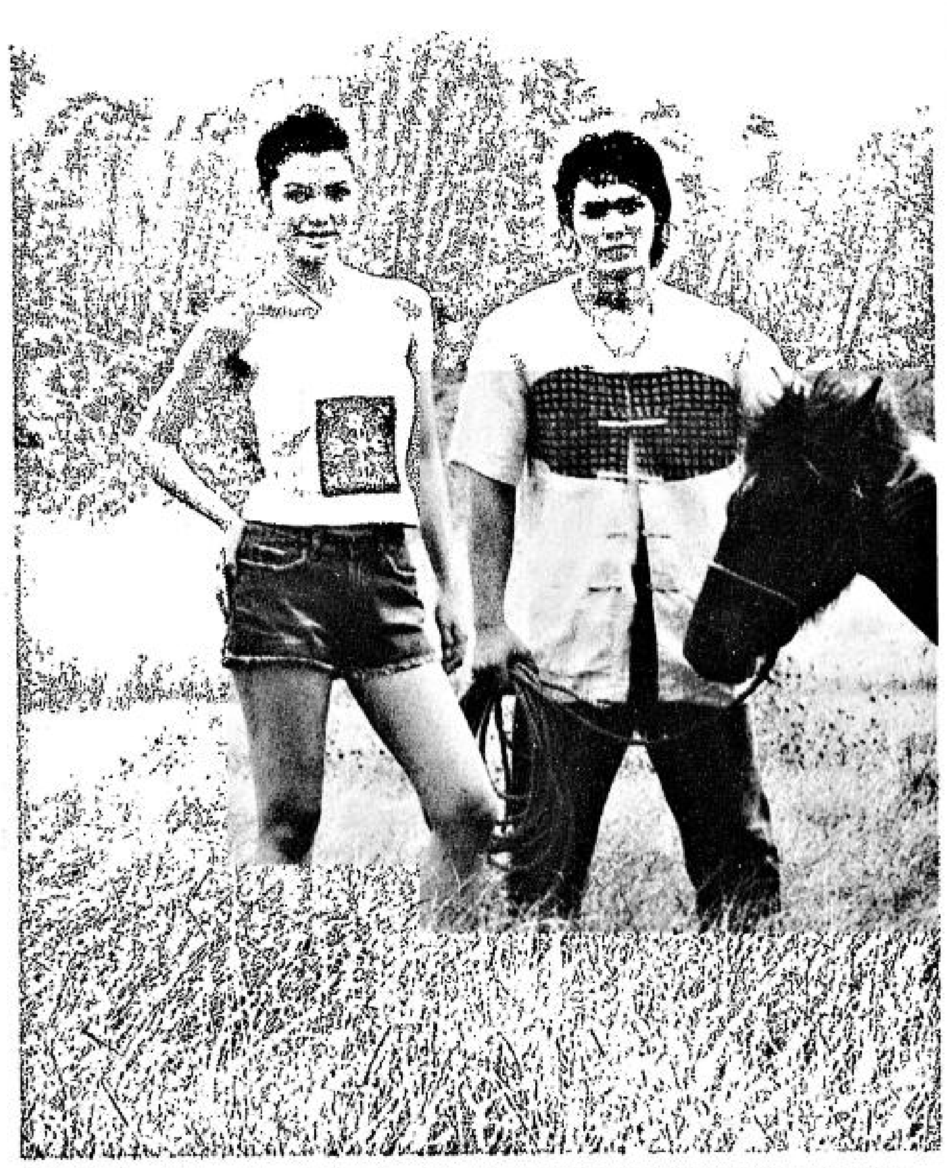
At present, Sandico-Ong deals directly with one Mangyan individual who supplies her with *habol* from four other weavers. She uses the fabric in her bags, and to accent her menswear and ladies' casuals and evening wear.

By incorporating them into her designs, the determined designer hopes to elevate the use of the fabric from humble souvenir items to contemporary high fashion—a fitting tribute to a unique treasure of indigenous culture.

The Mangyan collection is available at Sandico-Ong's boutique in San Juan (35 Wilson St.; tel. 7265102/7260; e-mail ditasandico_ong@yahoo.com; or visit www.ditasandicoong.com).

E-mail the author at cmoral@inquirer.com.ph

COLUMN gown accented with asymmetric Mangyan fabric on the hip



HALTER top with hand-beaded front motif and Oriental-inspired shirt with Mangyan *habol* accent

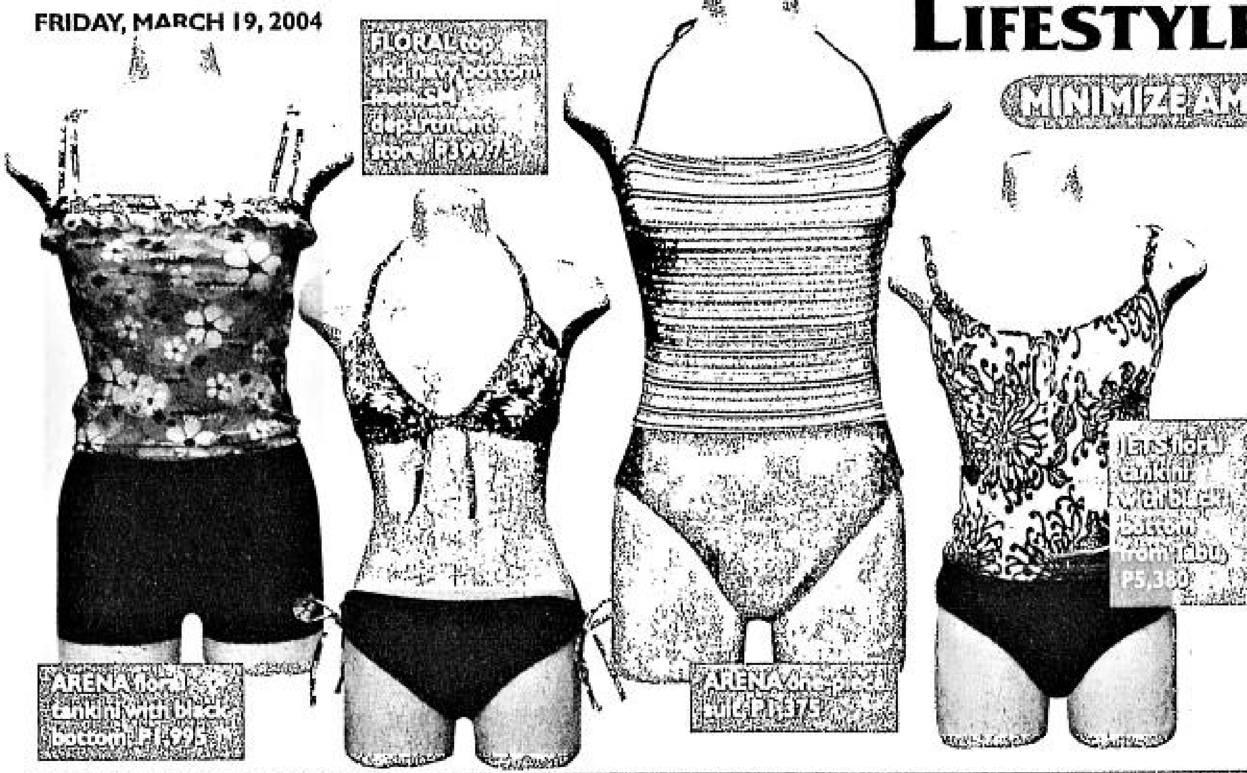
CREATIVE DIRECTOR ANTONIO SALAC SANTOS
PHOTOS JAY JAVIER
MODELS JP ABINUMAN AND JASON COLIS
MAKEUP FRANCIS VICTORINO
LOCATION SUGUICAY ISLAND, BULALAKAW, ORIENTAL MINDORO

The long and short of swimsuits

From page 11

PHOTOS: JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

MINIMIZE AMPLE HIPS AND TUMMY



FLORAL top and navy bottom from SM department store, P399.75

ARENA floral tankini with black bottom, P1,995

ARENA one-piece suit, P1,375

JETS floral tankini with black bottom from Tabu, P5,380

BY PICKING an attention-grabbing top with an attractive pattern and color and matching it with a dark, solid bottom, you draw attention away from your hips and focus more on your upper body.

Ombre patterns that graduate from light on the top to dark on the bottom are also perfect hip minimizers. Or try color-blocking by using suits with darker side panels that trim a few inches off the hips. Empire-waist suits and strapless styles also create much needed balance.

The same basic principles apply when minimizing your stomach. Diagonal and Chevron (a V-pattern that runs from top to bottom) also create the illusion of a curvy mid-section.

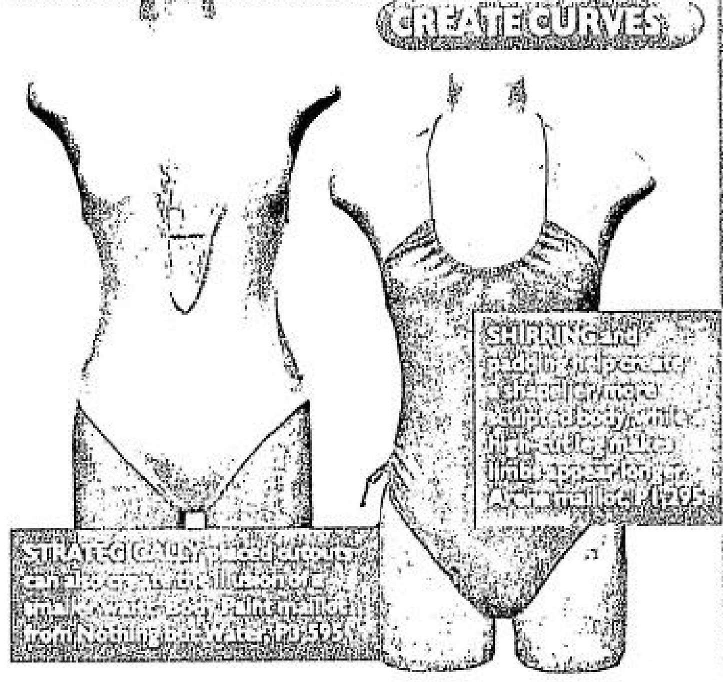
Side shirring that curves in at the waist, a high Lycra content and a bottom with a higher waistband disguise unwanted girth.

SHORTEN A LONG TORSO

TANKINI from SM department store, P[illegible]

A TANKINI with horizontal lines plus contrasting colors and prints make the midsection look shorter. A tankini also allows extra room for better fit and proportion.

CREATE CURVES



STRATEGICALLY placed cutouts can also create the illusion of a smaller waist. Body Paint maillot from Nothing but Water, P3,595

SHIRRING and padding help create a shapelier, more sculpted body, while high-cut legs make limbs appear longer. Arena maillot, P1,295

BALANCE BIG BREASTS

BIKINI from SM department store, P399.75

CREATE the right proportion by choosing a bigger bottom and sufficient bra top that provides enough coverage. Built-in support from cups or underwire, wider straps, densely woven fabrics and a high Lycra content help contain ample-sized breasts.

Color-blocking or the use of dark colors in strategic locations and the use of a halter-suit with support also help.

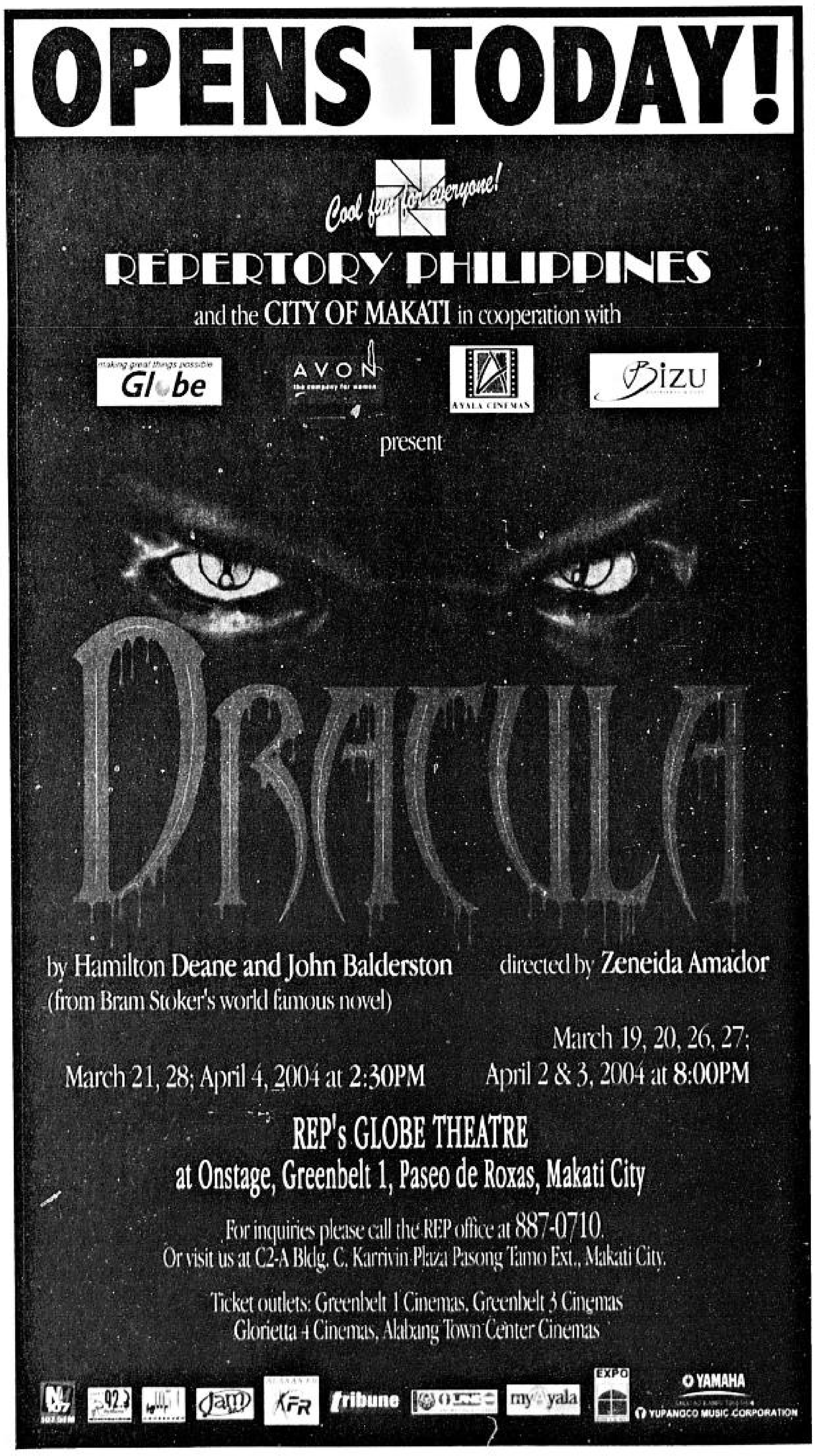
Email the author at apsadvice@hotmail.com

FLATTER A BOYISH FIGURE

HORIZONTAL stripes create much needed volume. Triangle two-piece from Tabu, P[illegible]

SUGAR Lips Boy-cut piece from Nothing but Water, P4,390

Only those with narrow body types can get away with boy shorts, while triangle tops that are just the right size and have a hint of padding create perky and natural-looking busts.



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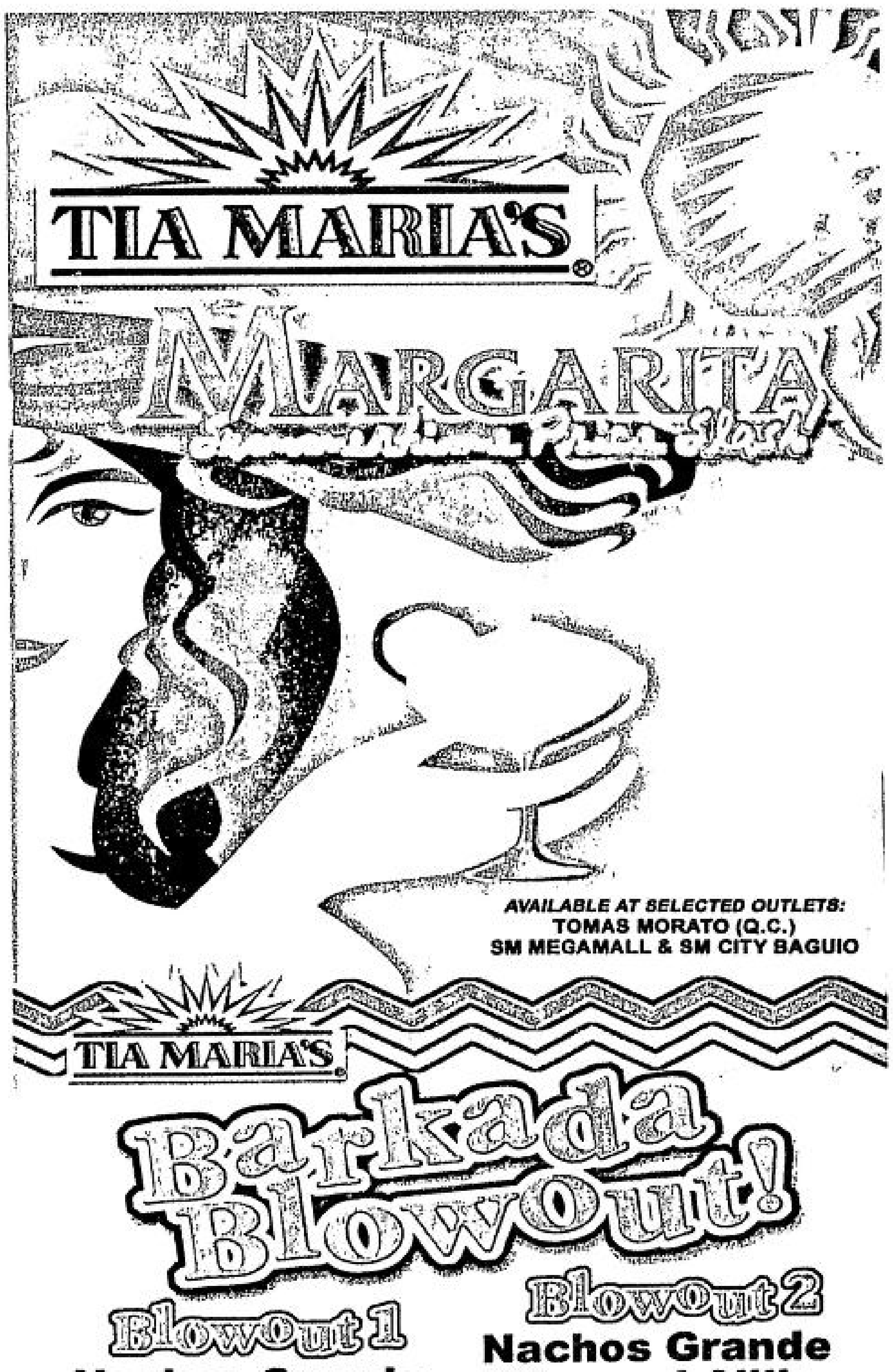

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A DINNER-DANCE was held recently at the Casino Español de Manila. Among the guests who attended were (from left) Armin and Isabel Aslanian, Isabel Guevara, Spanish Ambassador Ignacio Sagaz and wife Aurora, Michael and Chan Eiland from the US Embassy in Bangkok and Dr. Alberto Guevara Jr.

DECEMBER, January and February birthday celebrators recently hosted a dinner in Forbes Park for Assumption classmates ('63 and '67).

Workshop on fashion design illustration

GOINGS ON

THE TOTALLE Wellness and Fitness Center at the Philippine Women's University offers a workshop on fashion design illustration from April to May. To be conducted by artist/designer Danilo Franco, participants will learn the basics of drawing fashion figures and interpreting various fabrics and accessories through lines and colors. Call 5242609/ 5268421 local 142.

SALE. The Home Center offers a 10-percent discount on home accessories, décor, furniture and novelty items by presenting a special coupon. Customers can get their coupons from any Eastwood property consultant or at the Eastwood City Information Center on Orchard Road.

SEMINAR. International Education Specialists will present an orientation seminar on New Zealand as an emerging education haven on March 20, 2 p.m., at the Inter-Ed office, 2/F Trafalgar Plaza, H.V. de la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati. Call 8191001/02.

BOOK LAUNCH. "Wounded No More" by Dr. Josef de Ubaldo will be launched on March 21, 5:30 p.m., at the Manansala function room of Holiday Inn Galleria Manila, Ortigas Center.

FAIR. "Summer Festival Fair: Discovering the Philippines Through Arts and Products" will be held on March 19-21 at Megatrade Hall 3, Megamall, Mandaluyong. Summer themes like travel and tours, outdoor specialty shops, sporting goods, food delicacies, health and beauty products, native handicrafts, souvenirs and plants will be showcased.

REUNION. The Japan Foundation Manila Office will hold the third reunion of the Japan Foundation Fellows Alumni Association on March 20 at Makati Shangri-La's Parañaque Room. Call 8116155 to 58.

SPIRITUAL RETREAT. The National Real Estate Association will hold a spiritual retreat on March 20-21 at the NREA-Jesclare Chapel in Hacienda Dolores, Porac, Pampanga. Call 9134463/ 9123492.

WORKSHOP. The AIDS Society of the Philippines will offer Basic Acting and Scriptwriting Workshop for Film and TV from April to July. Registration is on March 27 and 28 at the UP Film Center Institute, Diliman, QC. Call 5231334 or 5365509/12.

EXHIBIT. AV Surfer is holding three digital exhibits until March 31 at Alabang Town Center, Robinsons Metro East and Harrison Plaza. It features camcorders, digital still cameras, projection and LCD TVs and DVD players.

SYMPOSIUM. Makabayang Tagalog Pasig Chapter will hold a symposium on "An Ideal Election" and the "5-point Alternative Political Reform Program" on April 3, 3-7 p.m. The event will be held at San Felipe Santiago Room, Formation Center Bldg., Immaculate Conception Parish, Malinao, Pasig. Call 0918-7200053.

RETREAT. The Community of Fasters for Justice and Peace will hold a three-day live-in Holy Week fast and retreat on April 7-10 at Eliazo Hall, Ateneo de Manila University campus. Call Angge Soriano at 3742170; Cecille Mercado 9253169; Beng Dionela 3742017; Lilli Ann Aquino 9253745.

COURSE. A Summer Charm and Modeling Course for pre-teens and teens will be held on April 14-May 22. Enrollment is ongoing at the Joji Ilagan Foundation, Chavez St., Davao City. Call 2275602/ 2263783.

WORKSHOP. The Mandy Navasero summer photo workshop for batch 2004 will be held on April 17 to May 29, 2-5 p.m. An orientation will be held on April 3. Registration is ongoing at Mandy Navasero PhotoPRO Studio, room 227, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air II Village, Makati. Call 8991767/ 8963208.

PROMO. Sta. Lucia East Bowling Center holds Go for Time Bowling promo until April 30. The bowling center is located at the 3/L phase 3, Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall.

COURSE. The Beijing Union University is offering a study and leisure tour on April 18 to May 31. It includes round-trip airfare via Cathay Pacific Airways, twin sharing board and lodging, tuition fee, insurance coverage, transfers and entrance fee. Call 8928631 to 35 or 8924704 to 05.

WORKSHOP. Gantimpala Theater Foundation and the National Parks Development Committee will hold the GTF-NPDC Summer Musical Theater Workshops on April 15-May 21 at the Rehearsal Hall of Concert at the Park Auditorium, Luneta, Manila. Enrollment starts on March 16. Call 5365860/ 5280603/ 0918-9212866.

CONVENTION. The Philippine Academy of Physicians in School Health Inc. will hold its annual convention on May 15-16 at the Glaxo and Smith Kline Center for Education and the Arts at 2266 Chino Roces Ave. Extension, Makati. Call 9286051.

BOOKFAIR. The 8th Academic Bookfair will be held on July 12-16, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. at the UP Bahay ng Alumni, Diliman, QC. Call 9279858.

EXPO. Supermarket Show gathers retailers and suppliers of innovative products, equipment and technology on July 14-17 at the World Trade Center. Call 8907532/ 8952363.

SILVER JUBILEE. The class of 1979 of the high school department of St. Mary's College, QC will celebrate its silver jubilee in July. Call Agnes Bengco at 4272771/ 0917-5305170 or Joy Cirineo, 6280575/ 0917-5311984.

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Pick your (peri)menopausal symptom

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

YOU wouldn't believe what I heard women talk about as they waited for the curtain to rise on "Menopause, the Musical" over the weekend.

It was like listening to a running medical/emotional/sexual bulletin. One girl, who's barely in her 40s, was talking about really "going dry" down there. I thought that was stuff I only read about, but hearing it said in a clinical though mournful manner made me realize that: first, there's indeed such a phase as going dry, even for these relatively young and glamorous babes; second, women and girls really needed a bonding forum/session where they could air so candidly and even graphically what it was that ailed them or made them feel insecure about their body and health.

There was also ample buzz about hot flashes, migraines and sweating, which marked this phase in a woman's life when her menstrual cycle ceases and hormonal imbalance sets in. Women in their 40s or even late 30s are said to go through perimenopause ("around menopause") when changes begin.

Reluctant to spend Friday evening in an all-woman gabfest, I was actually surprised that the Music Museum, where the musical is running, was packed with young, mid-age and relatively old women—and even men.

The musical deserves this huge crowd. It's a way to wind down on a Friday evening.

It looks like its producers—Bahaghari Productions' **Margie Floirendo, Carmita Francisco, Nina Romualdez, Precy Florentino** and **Maan Hontiveros**—have a winner in their hands.

Written by **Jeannie Linders**, a 54-year-old event marketer from Florida, this musical makes hilarious the changes a 40- or 50-something woman goes through, by turning them into songs, actually hits whose lyrics have been changed, such as "Staying Alive," "I Heard it through the Grapevine" and other musical markers from the past.

Don't expect it to be cerebral angst; it's

PICK/J3

The temper outbursts and mood swings everywhere make you wonder how much of our national fate hangs on hormonal imbalance

SHEILA Francisco, Mitch Valdes, Leah Navarro and Nanette Inventor star in "Menopause, The Musical."

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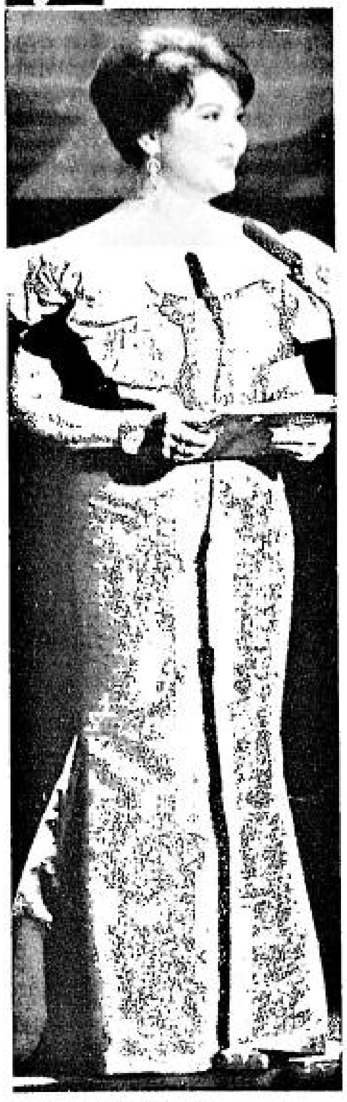
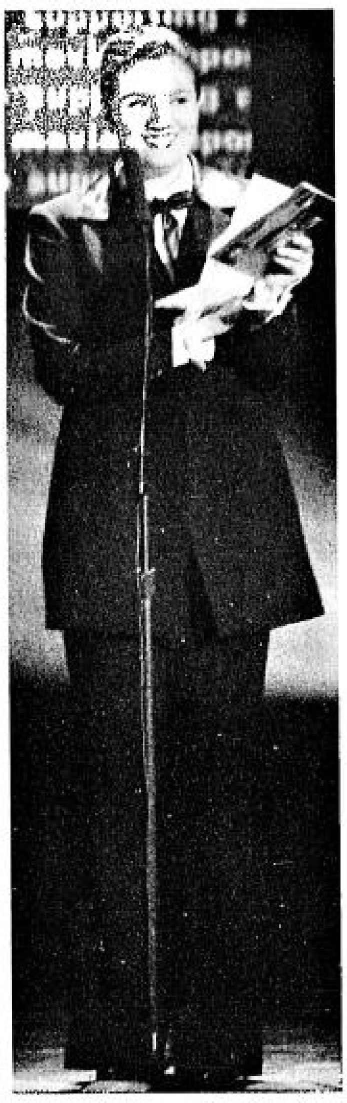
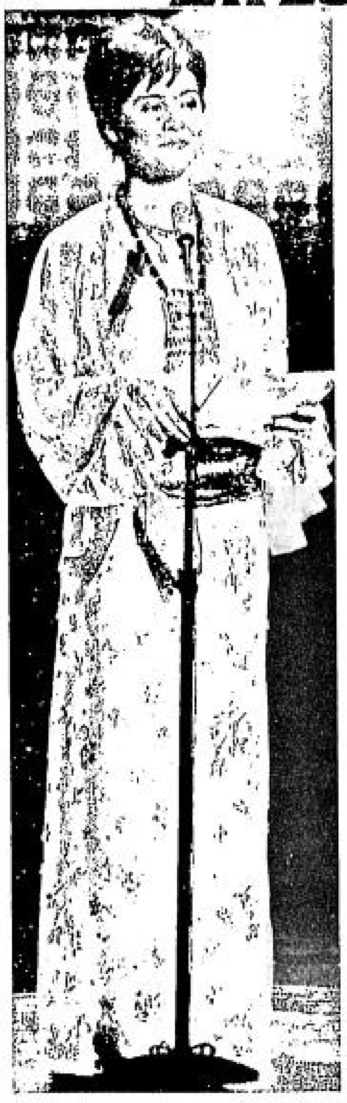


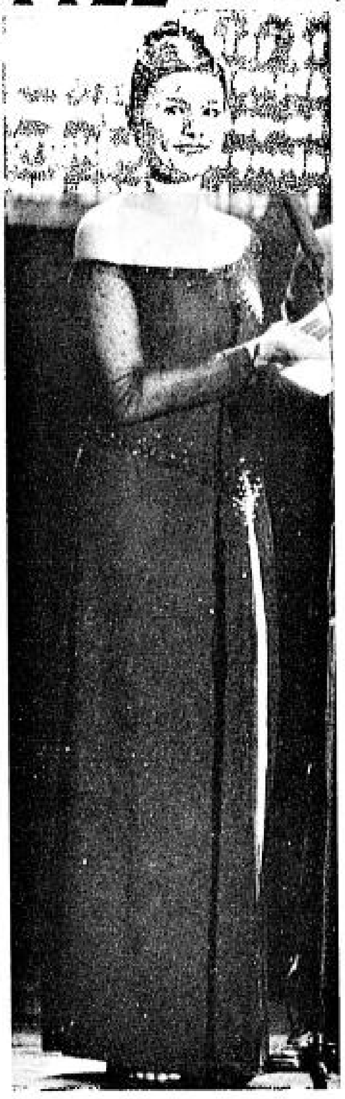
CALL TO ARMS. The gown's color and fishtail silhouette flatter Helen Gamboa, but those huge yellow details broaden her shoulders and arms.



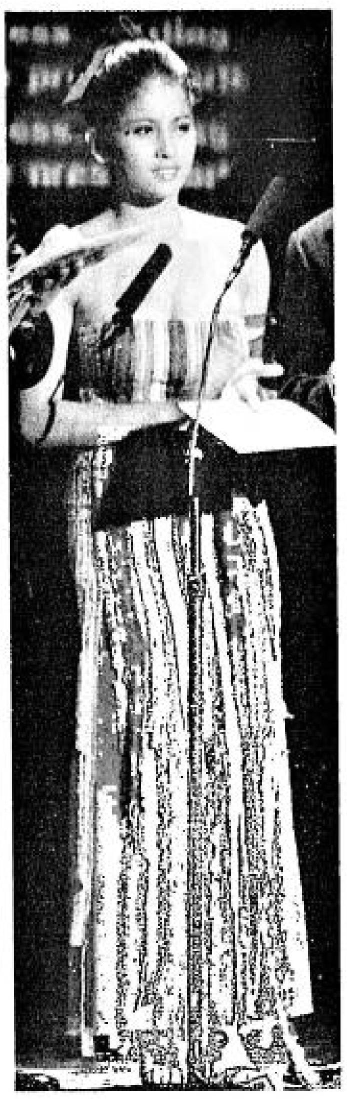
FINGER LICKIN' BAD. Sunshine Dizon does a Diane Keaton in a mannish getup, but ends up looking like Colonel Sanders.



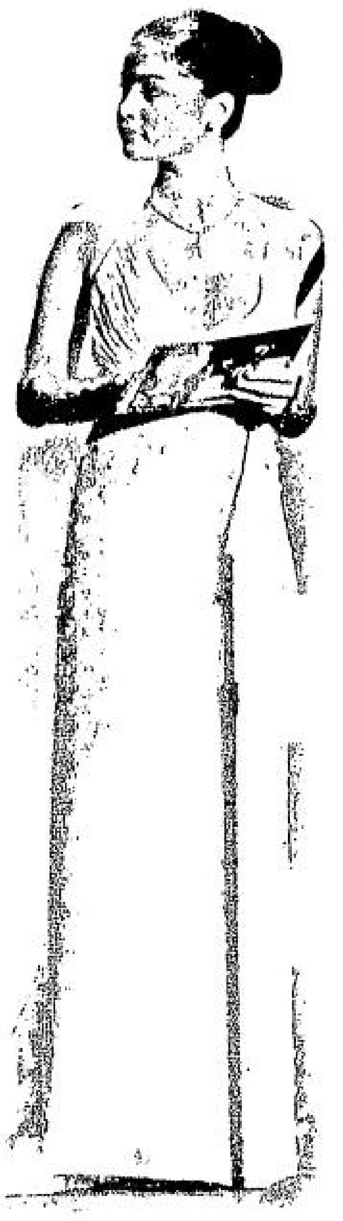
SOUTHERN DISCOMFORT. What happened to Dawn Zulueta? The Davao-based star, in a beaded outfit and chunky jewelry, looks like a gypsy who just missed her caravan.



BLAND AMBITION. A perky young woman like Iza Calzado deserves more than this generic-looking column with a sprinkle of beadwork.



KILL FRILL. Whatever possessed Viva Hot Babe RU Miranda to slip into this tapestry of a gown? Quick, tie her to the nearest lamppost before she hangs herself with one of those tassels!



WHITE HOT! Anne Curtis turns on the heat in a ruched halter with beadwork on the bodice and skirt. This girl will go places.

A less-than-starry night

Dowdy, dumpy and overaged debutante—take your pick of the Star Awards' signature looks this year

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

DINA Bonnevie best summed up every movie star's concern now that the awards season is once more upon us.

The multi-awarded actress, who recently hosted the Star Awards for Movies with Aga Muhlach and Dawn Zulueta, lamented the fact that celebrities like her go through great lengths to dress up during such ceremonies only to be panned the next day by know-it-all critics.

We commiserate with her plight.

But in her haste to vent her ire on no one in particular, Dina conveniently forgot one cardinal rule that comes with the territory.

As movie stars and supposed paragons of good taste, they're presumably paid millions to look impeccable, if not set standards as far as fashion and grooming go. They owe it to the fans, and the fans deserve no less.

Since most of these stars essay all sorts of characters on television and films during the entire year, they're understandably at the mercy of costume and production designers. Fine.

Awards nights, besides giving the public a glimpse of these stars' innate fashion sense, offer them a much-needed respite from role-playing and a chance to project themselves in their sartorial splendor to the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, role-playing doesn't always end on the set, as many of these stars continue to assume year in and year out certain stock characters all the way to the venue.

A good example? Dina herself. She tried to desperately turn back the clock by sporting a chartreuse gown with a pair of peek-a-boo sleeves that doubled as flounces. Her weighed-down, curly tresses and wispy bangs didn't flatter her any.

Instead of looking like a debutante who came to her party 25 years too late, Dina should start dressing her age: a fairly attractive woman in her early 40s. There's nothing wrong with that. We believe she's far too intelligent to allow herself to slowly turn into a caricature.

Anything but polished

Comeback star Dawn Zulueta, to our best knowledge, was always a sensible dresser. Aside from being blessed with a lovely face, she had good taste, and this was reflected in her choice of clothes and accessories.

Sadly, years of living in Davao, away from the show biz glare, may have dulled her inherent sense of style.

Dawn looked anything but polished in a beaded, two-piece number with chunky accessories from her adopted South. Ruffles along the sleeves' hem made her look dowdier. If such is the price of domesticity, then we rest our case.

Those who consider Susan Roces as one of FPJ's saving graces should the latter win in his presidential bid shouldn't set their hopes too high.

Susan is an accomplished actress and devoted wife, but a fashionable first lady she won't be—if we are to go by the atrocity she wore to the Star awards.

The former movie queen, who earned a lifetime achievement award, looked like hobbit royalty in a blood-red satin creation with a built-in shawl that only made her look dumpy and further called attention to her arms.

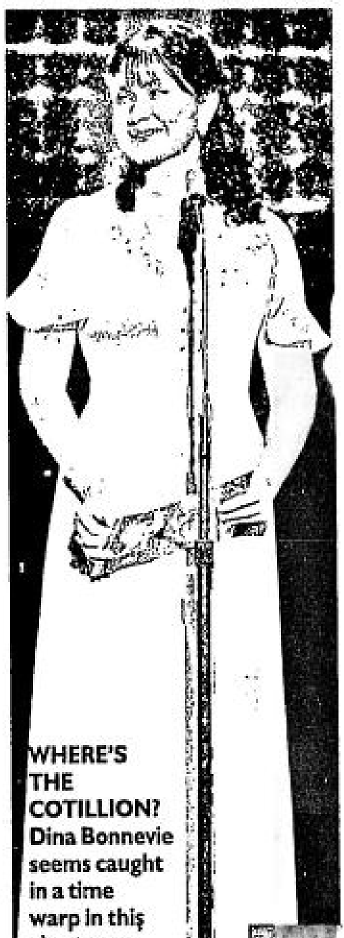
Dizzying beadwork on the bodice further muddled her fashion statement—if there was any at all.

Susan should take her cue from Gloria Romero by wearing more structured and linear pieces. A dark pantsuit with hints of beadwork may do the trick.

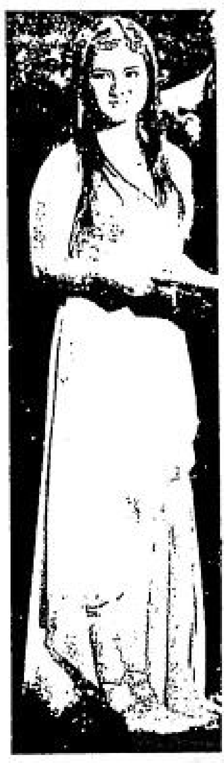
As for the unremarkable outfits most of the other stars wore (almost all of them seem to favor columns), we leave them up to you to judge.

No matter what these celebrities say, you owe it to yourselves to demand no less than the best from them.

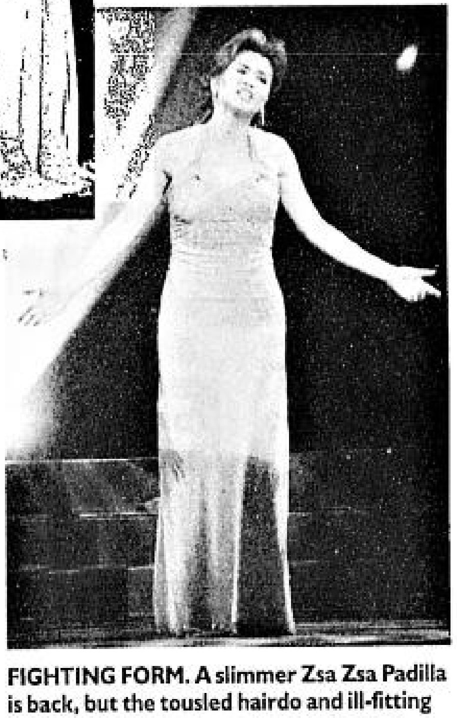
E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph



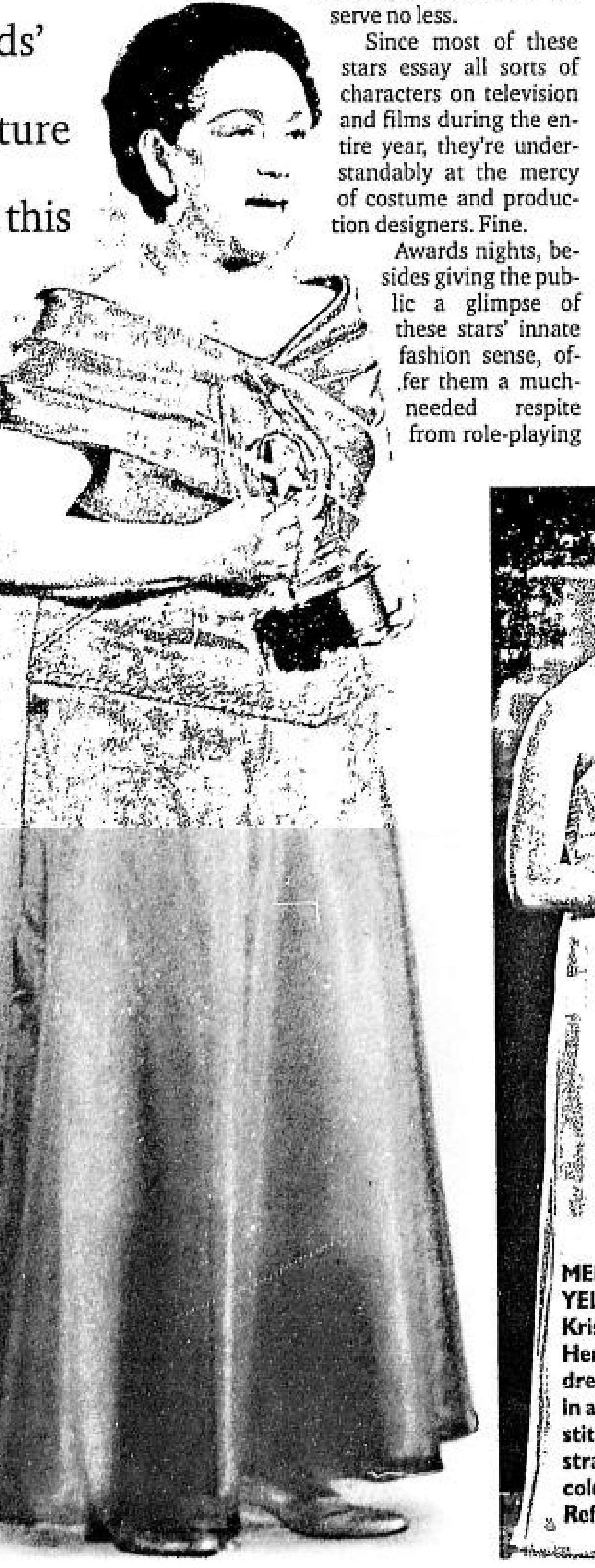
WHERE'S THE COTILLION? Dina Bonnevie seems caught in a time warp in this chartreuse gown fit for a debutante.



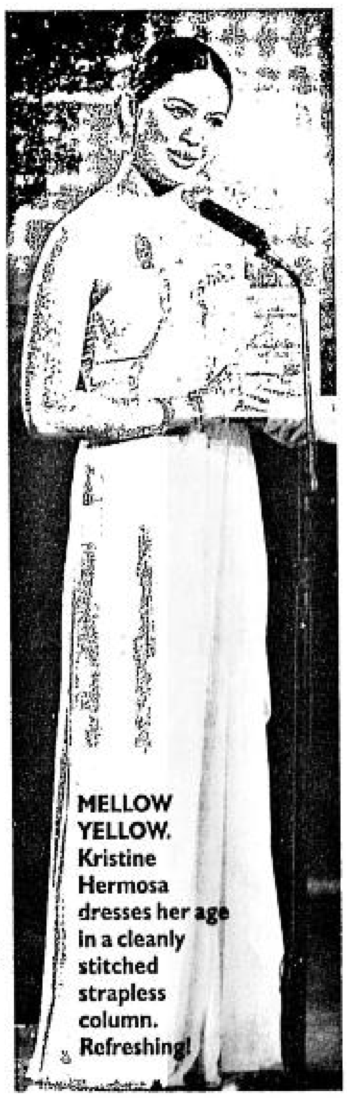
SHOE HER! Camille Prats' choice of shoes, a pair of kitten-heeled mules, comes short, literally and figuratively. And with those beaded breast patches, she can easily play younger sister to Xena, the warrior princess.



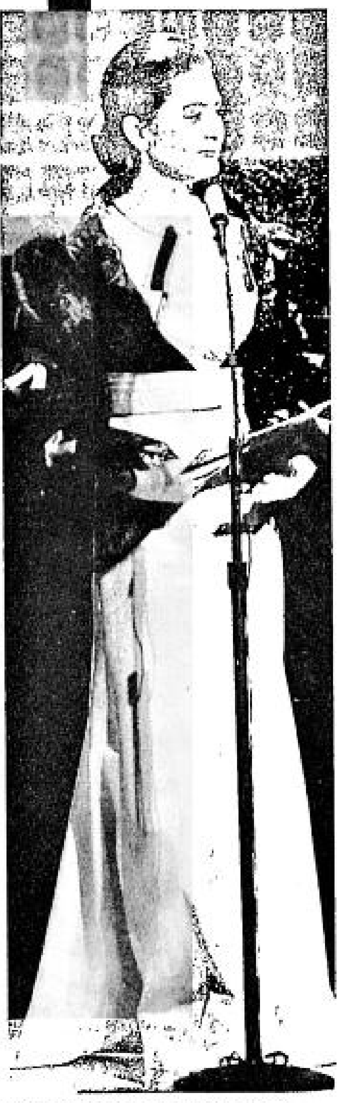
FIGHTING FORM. A slimmer Zsa Zsa Padilla is back, but the tousled hairdo and ill-fitting gown don't able to keep up with the new figure.



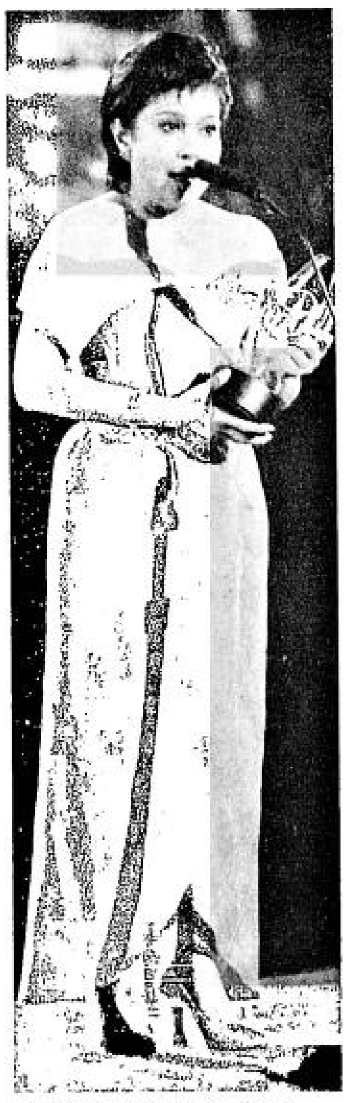
SWANIE'S SONG. Let's hope we've seen the last of Susan Roces' outfit: a satin number with dizzying beadwork and a shapeless bodice.



MELLOW YELLOW. Kristine Hermosa dresses her age in a cleanly stitched strapless column. Refreshing!



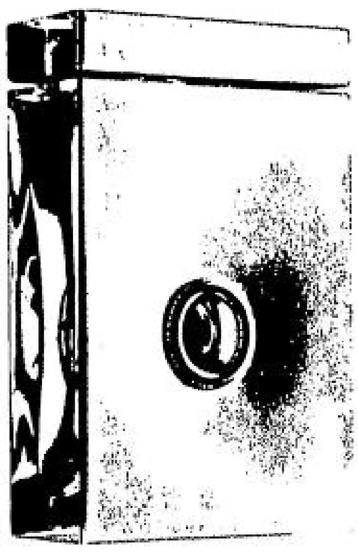
RIBBONS AND LACE. Kristine looks mature in a pink column with a lacey *panuelo* that extends to her sleeves. This gown, sans ribbons, would have worked well on an older woman.



RAINY-DAY SPECIAL. Nora Aunor dresses up for the occasion in an off-shoulder overlap in turquoise. But she should lose the belt, which cuts her in half, and wear a longer gown next time.

Fragrance for women of freedom and purity

DURING the '60s, Paco Rabanne revolutionized fashion by marrying unusual materials such as plastic and metal. His clothes emphasized the body's curves and shapes, revealing a sensuality that gave women a sense of independence, and the daring to claim their individuality. Thus was born the mark of Paco Rabanne.


PACO Rabanne pour Elle

Today, the House of Paco Rabanne continues its influence and introduces a new expression of a woman's natural sensuality and freedom—Paco Rabanne pour Elle.

The scent begins with a pure light and vivid freshness from Italian Mandarin and White Pepper, softened by a touch of White Freesia.

The heart is composed of interlaced flowers—Absolute Rose, Karo Karounde, South African flower and Jasmine Petals; while the base is a soft, sensual fusion of Peach, Massoia Wood and Amber, which is the keystone of this blend.

Paco Rabanne pour Elle is packaged in a pearly white bottle that signifies femininity, luminosity and purity. Its symbolic element is a metal ring. Metal is the emblem of the brand. The ring, a jewel, is a symbol of infinity.

Paco Rabanne pour Elle is available in leading department stores nationwide, and is exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corp.

Pick your. . .

From page J1

just fun—how women's moans and woes can be turned into laughter.

Directed by **Leo Rialp**, the musical stars **Mitch Valdes**, **Leah Navarro**, **Nanette Inventor** and **Sheila Francisco**—all hilariously consummate in their acting and singing. They may be acting like menopausal women but they surely raised the performance bar. Watch them act out the symptoms menopausal or perimenopausal women go through —from hot flashes, sweating, temper outbursts to chocolate craving—and you'll crack up.

For me, the punchline moment was right after the show. As we began to file out of our seats, **Ces Drilon** turned to me—"So which of those symptoms do you have?"

Ces got me for a moment there because I didn't know what to say since, frankly, aside from chocolate craving (which I began to have when I was two years old), my answer would have to be "none." But then she wouldn't believe it; I wouldn't either. So I said, since I'd been doing aero and gym since my first childbirth in the '80s, and now tennis and, in between, the kick-ass sessions at work, perhaps I'd been too busy to notice.

Indeed perhaps that's why this stage has been called the "silent passage" in the **Gail Sheehy** bestseller. Sheehy wrote, "It is during perimenopause—in their forties—that women feel most estranged from their bodies." For this is the time women experience "hot flashes, night sweats and insomnia, sudden bouts of waistline bloat, possibly heart palpitations, crying for no reason or temper outbursts... " Women feel their symptoms sometimes a good 10 years away from menopause, or when they hit 40. (Didn't know that until I read the book again now.)

Back to women talk that night.

"Don't you get cranky?" someone asked.

Everybody at the table said they did. I did, too, I said, but for a good cause especially at work, I said, where premeditated cruelty was a must.

"Hyper-sensitive. No wonder my mom is super... like we're talking and she just bangs the phone on me, or she starts lashing out at the maids every morning," my friend said. For my own mom, chewing out the household help had been a morning ritual since I was a kid, like it was with my great *lola*, so I presumed scolding the maid was genetic in my family and it became my lifelong obsession to be different in that gene pool. (Serious.)

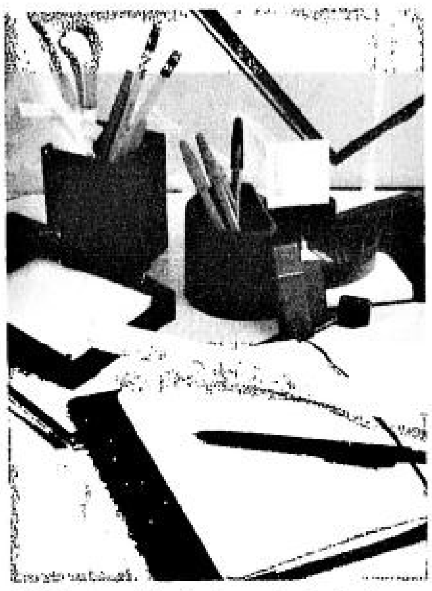
I asked if they ever wondered how much of the mood swings and temper outbursts I saw in women around us, in many of us, was owing to perimenopause or menopause. And these women hold the reins—in the office, at home, in society in general. Do you realize that the men (for them it's called andropause) and women in power today —from government to business to monkey business—are either perimenopausal or menopausal? You mean the national mess we're in is due, in part, to hormonal imbalance? I never thought until now how much of our collective fate hung on hormonal imbalance.

Sheehy wrote: "It is essential to claim the pause. Remember, if 45 is the old age of youth, 50 is the youth of a woman's Second Adulthood."

The musical runs until April 4, with two matinee shows at 4 p.m. on March 28 and April 4. Just a thought for the producers: Why not bring the musical to Pegasus, Lexus, Classmates and the like, so the message is brought to the men as well?

E-mail the author at tsanjuan @skyinet.net

Gift ideas for new graduates


DESK set and leatherbound notebook

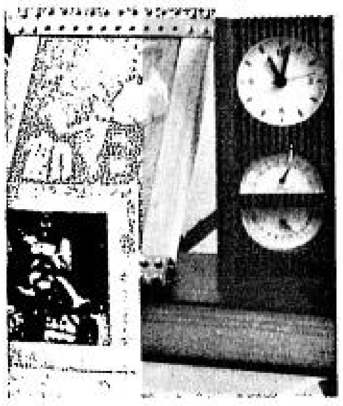
MAKE graduation even more memorable with an appropriate gift.

To make sure your gift will be appreciated, choose a one-stop shop that offers a variety of merchandise to choose from.

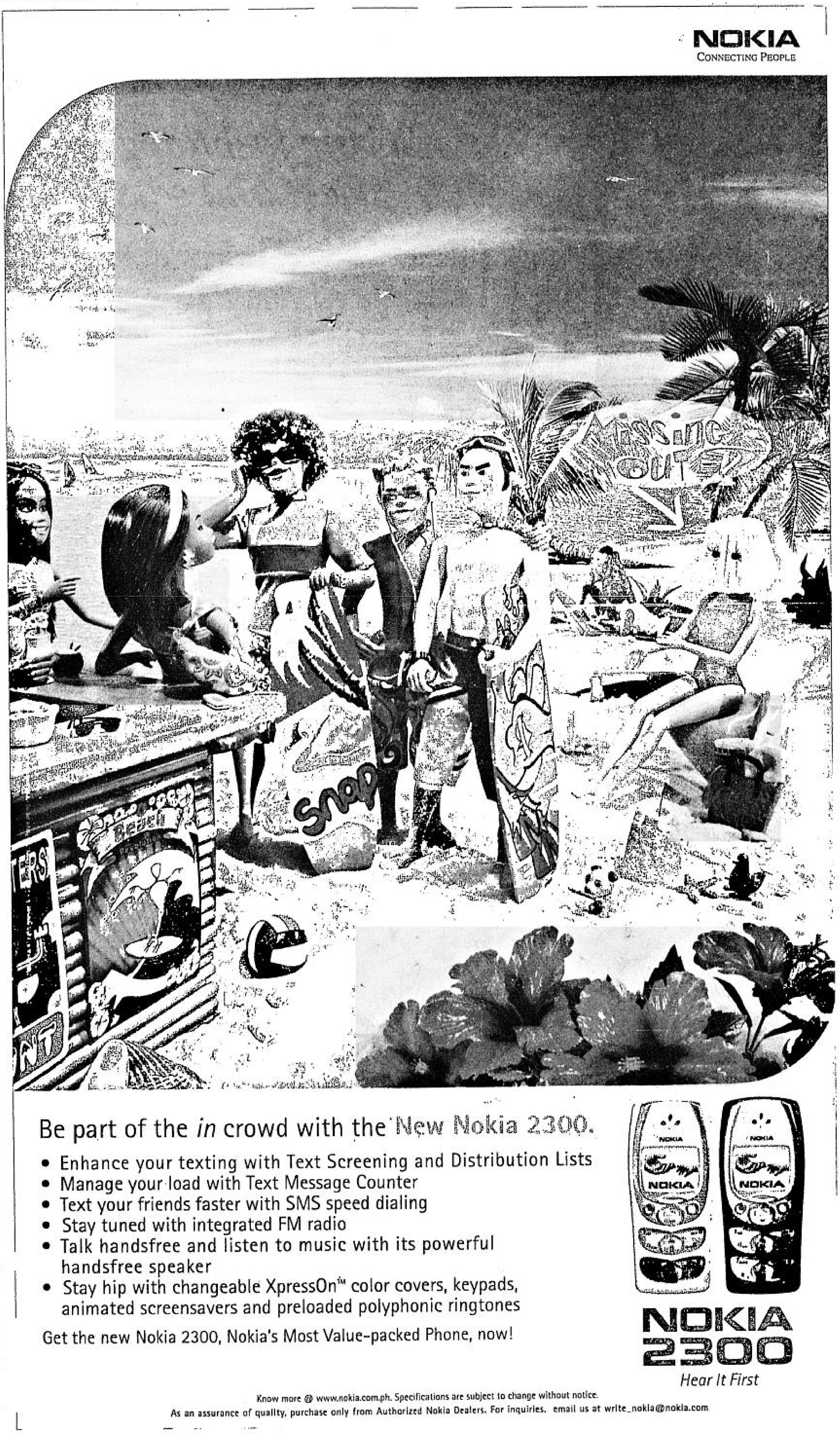
Robinsons Department Store (RDS) has lined up an extensive selection of gift items especially for graduation. RDS has picture frames of various sizes and designs, wallets for women and men, casual clothes and fancy writing sets for children.

RDS also has alarm clocks that are both decorative and useful.

For college graduates in particular, RDS has an assortment of bags for women. Also available are leather cases and portfolios and desk accessory sets for both men and women.


ALARM clock and picture frames

Visit www. rds.com.ph or any Robinsons Department Store.



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CAP-SLEEVED cotton/spandex top with Battenburg lace trim and flare silk skirt. At right, linen long-sleeved easy-fit shirts

CAREFREE non-iron cotton oxford shirt

Spring fashion goes sweet and sassy

THIS season, Liz Claiborne is all about being a lady—about looking pretty and alluring in charming prints and delicate details.

Conversational prints, bright patterns and delicate embroidery show the range of a lady from modern to retro to simple and glamorous.

Liz Claiborne's new collection is bursting with tropical pinks and a squeeze of tang orange in stripes and prints. Carnaby hats and embroidery catch the light in baby blues, spring greens and primrose.

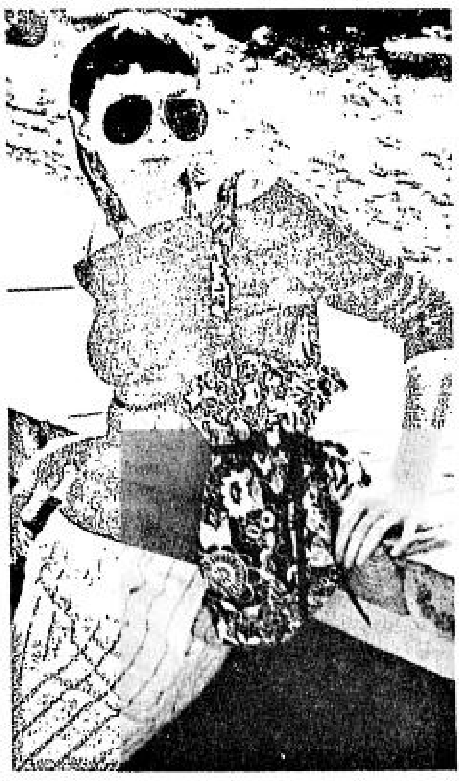
Prints come in various styles: few and flirty dots, stripes and scenic brushstroke prints on crisp cotton blouses and skirts or soft silk and seersucker styles.

The mood is sweet and sassy, becoming of the classic Liz Claiborne lady whose fresh, feminine style can be effortlessly achieved with a retro-feel sleeveless cotton poplin dress and skirt in linen prints or flared silk georgette.

The delicate details include grosgrain belts, printed sashes, whimsically embroidered shells or candy-colored cocktail rings.

Liz Claiborne's Spring 2004 collection is available at Liz Claiborne stores: 3/L Shangri-La Plaza Mall and 2/L Glorietta 4, Ayala Center.

BLUE and white striped vest under a black off-shoulder top paired with striped joggers



THREE-FOURTH-SLEEVED red bardot with striped trousers, and a floral bag

Stripes are key look of this season

TOPSHOP and Topman's Spring/Summer 2004 collection draws inspiration from sources as varied as the '20s flapper era and the '90s rave scene, the clothes are meant to evoke cool, casual sophistication—whether basking under the sun or partying the summer nights away.

Topshop's Riviera Chic takes its cue from screen legends Sophia Loren and Audrey Hepburn, with voluminous below-the-knee skirts, stylish knotted shirts, fitted polo shirts and dresses with nipped-in waistlines. Hues come in powder blue, burnt orange and brown with interior feel prints in muted tones.

Continuing the cool and casual trend is the 1920s flapper girl look, with drop-waist dresses and deep-V necklines over jeans. Key shades include flesh, raspberry, mint, sky blue and lemon.

Art Deco-inspired geometric lines, meanwhile, are featured on sexy flapper dresses with plunging necklines, fringing, sequin trims and muscle backs for evening wear. Essential colors are silver, mint and lilac.

Seaside is also a key style this season. Nautical stripes are splashed on jackets, tops, skirts, sexy box shape shorts and sailor pants. Then there's the sporty Eastside casual style of its number logo vests, cropped tops, sporty bras and jersey matching skirts in bubblegum pink, turquoise, magenta and lemon.

For Topman, the early '90s rave scene and the baggy culture are revived. Color palettes are muted in pastel shades, but sharper berry tones inject color into the range, and graduated rainbow rave and ethic prints add a touch of psychedelia to tees and pants.

Key items include pastel shell suits, low-neck tees, cotton parkas, oversized cut off sleepless goodies, blouson bombers, preppy jackets and knitwear. Must-have accessories are cropped peak caps in contrasting colors, pork pie hats, and pastel canvas rucksacks.

Look fab and feel fab in this season's must-haves from Topshop and Topman, with shops at Robinsons Place Manila, Robinsons Galleria, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Glorietta 3 and Alabang Town Center.

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